新連載
ニノヤ
under current
ドドドドドド
ドドドドド
ジャバ
ジャバジャバ

新連載

I knew it all along... the conclusion that the undercurrent of my heart led me to.

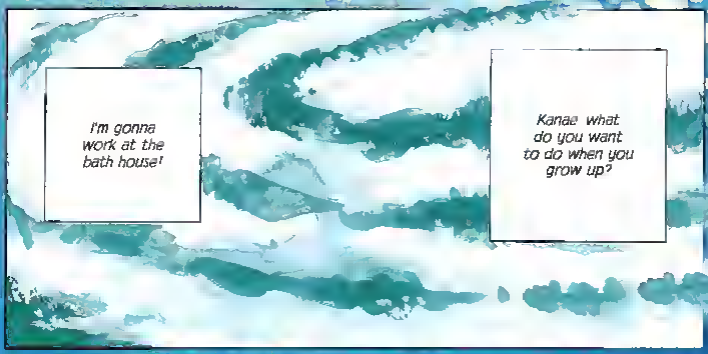
undercurrent

アンダーカレント

豊田徹也

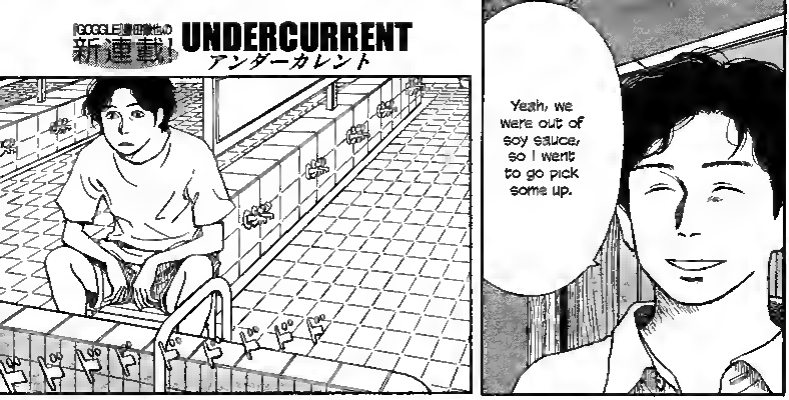
TOYODA TETSUYA

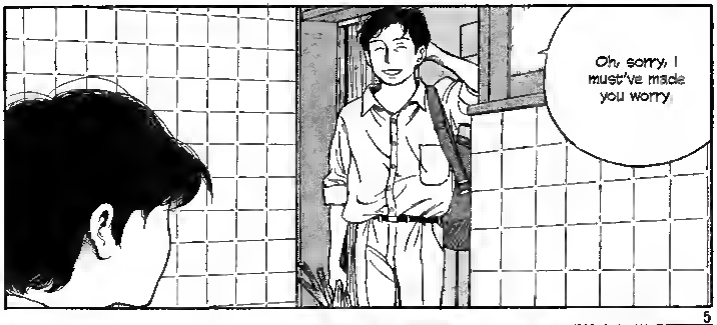
四季賞2003夏のコンテスト大賞作『GOGGLE（ゴーグル）』で話題を独占、
お待たせしました。


I'm gonna work at the bath house!
Kanae what do you want to do when you grow up?

I don't need one! I can do it with Dad and Auntie Kijima!
You're going into the family business? Then you'll have to find a husband and do it together.

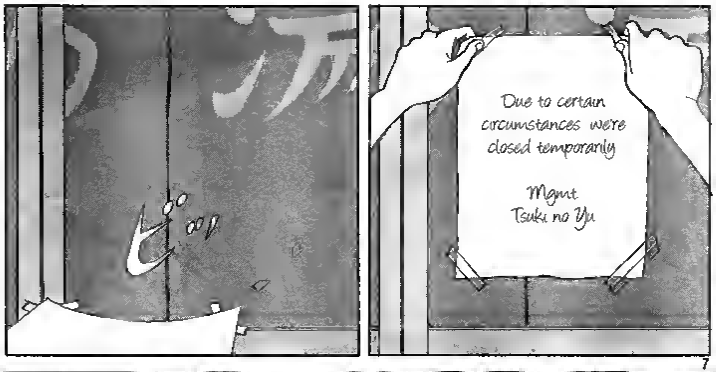
Kanae can do anything by herself, huh?


Yeah, we were out of soy sauce, so I went to go pick some up.


Oh, sorry, I must've made you worry.

5

Kana-chan!?


Due to certain circumstances we're closed temporarily
Mgmt. Tsuki no Yu

7

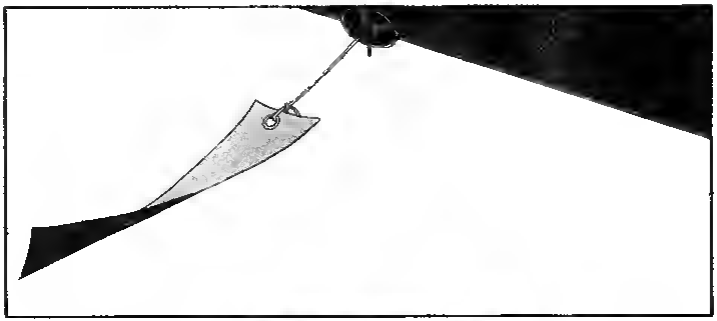
Did something happen? Spacing out like that—
Oh, Auntie

6

Are you open?
Hello.
Oh, Kana-chan, hello.
Yes, for the time being

I bought some toilet paper too, since there wasn't much left, right?
Yeah, thanks

Are you really all right?
I'm fine, I'm fine



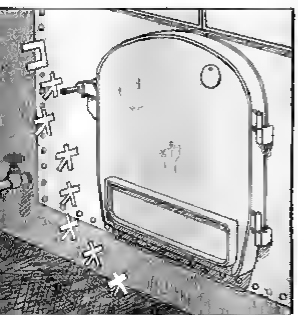
Hello!
ガラ

Welcome.

B

That's right, thanks to your patronage.
So you're finally open again, huh?

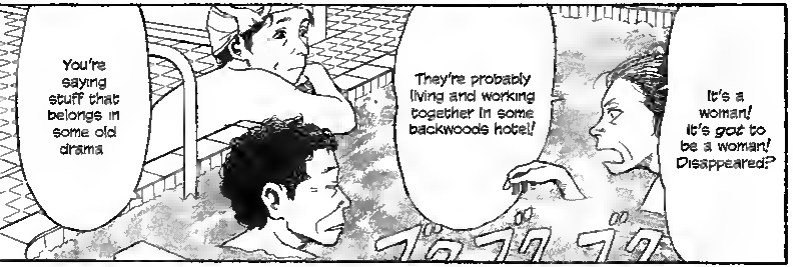
Huh?
Then her husband's back—
Huh... You were open again, so I thought he'd definitely be back, but...
That's right
HUH?!
Then...
he's not back yet?
Heya~
Well, I'm glad I didn't say anything stupid to Kana-chan


コォォォォォォォ

You guys talkin' 'bout that? Is her man back?

ドゴ
ナニ
ギィィィ
ゴォォォォ
10
But after all that, her husband left?
He didn't leave! He disappeared while on a union business trip.
It's not the same.
ゴゥ ゴゥ ゴゥ

Yeah... I don't know about them as a couple. I'm an outsider
Me neither..
Well ... From the outside they looked so lovey-dovey, but I dunno..
ゴボゴボゴボ


You're saying stuff that belongs in some old drama
They're probably living and working together in some backwoods hotel!
It's a woman! It's *got* to be a woman! Disappeared?
ゴボゴボゴボ

No matter how strong a woman might be, it's no good if she doesn't show that she relies on you sometimes.
And Kana-bou's real head-strong, too!
Thinking back on it, that guy always seemed to be worn pretty thin. He had a lot to worry about, didn't he? Him being an adopted husband, and all
ゴボゴボゴボ

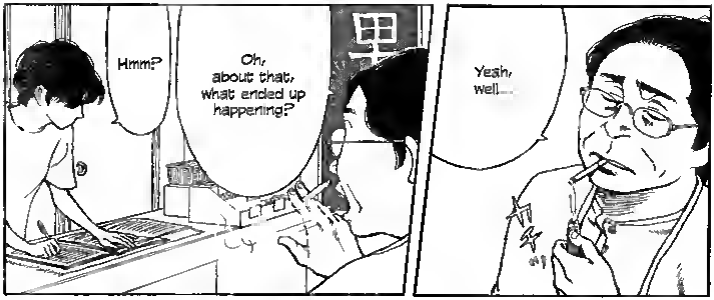
11

……

Well, we were on break for a long time and reopened with no fanfare.
As expected, not many customers today.
Ah, okay.
Kana-chan, let's trade. Go and get something to eat.
ガチャ
Haven't the customers been asking about things?
Gotcha.
I made some stew, so just take it off the stove.
After all, I'm the headstrong wife whose adopted husband ran out on her.
SLAM
It's fine. Say whatever you want.
ガチャッ
No, they haven't been asking. Even if they did, I wouldn't say anything.
12

—was discovered by a crew working on power lines
the remains are believed to be of an adult male approximately 175cm tall and 20 to 30 years of age
The local police who responded to the call offered this analysis
Since the remains were already skeletal, he is presumed to have been dead for at least a yea—
13

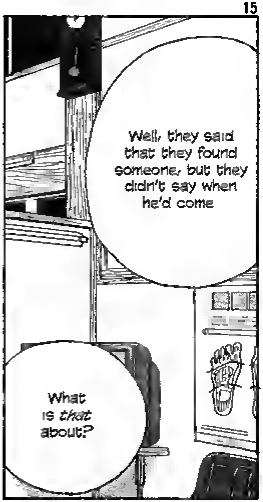
Good night
Thank you!
カチャ
カラ カラ
Are you going to clean up by yourself?
That's enough, Auntie, good work.
Phew
14
It's fine. There weren't many customers, so there won't be too much to do.
What a bother. If my back didn't hurt, I'd be able to help you


Hmm?
Oh, about that, what ended up happening?
Yeah, well...

Oh, that
You said that the union was going to refer you to someone who could help out

15

Yeah, take it easy. Good night
Good night
Well, don't overdo it


Well, they said that they found someone, but they didn't say when he'd come
What is *that* about?

ガッシュ
ガッシュ
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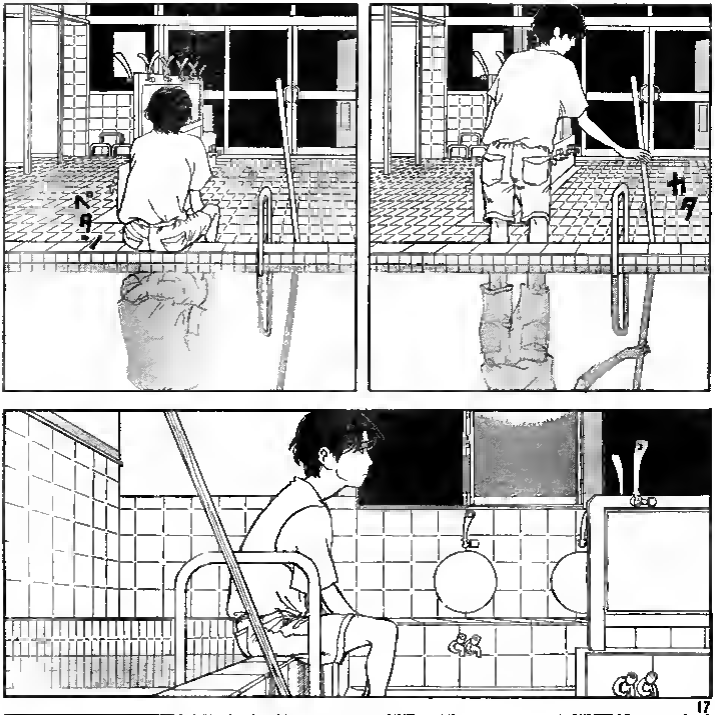
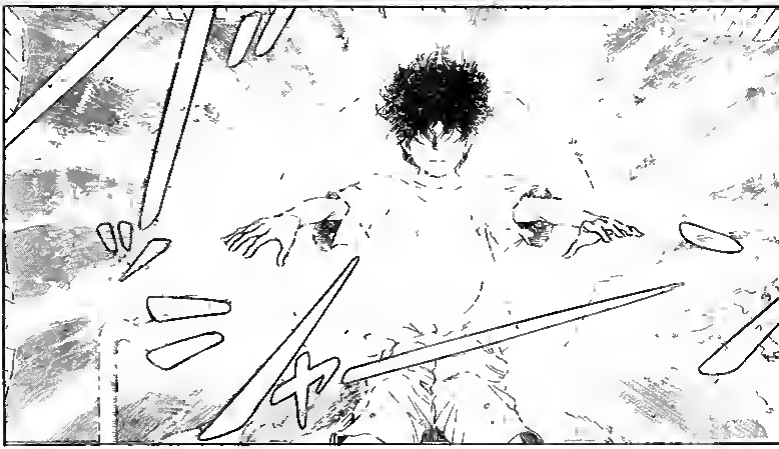
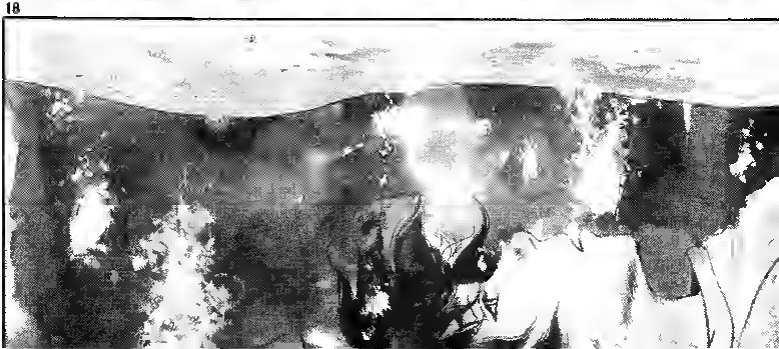
ガッシュ
16


ペタ…ン
ペタ…ン
17



18



19

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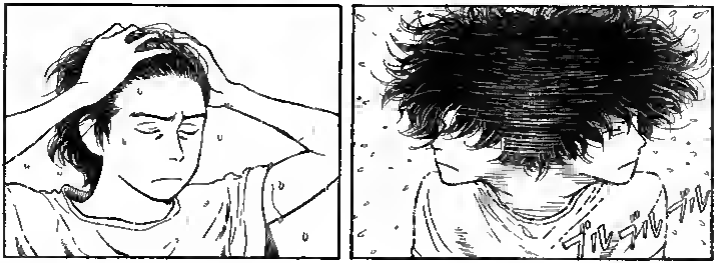
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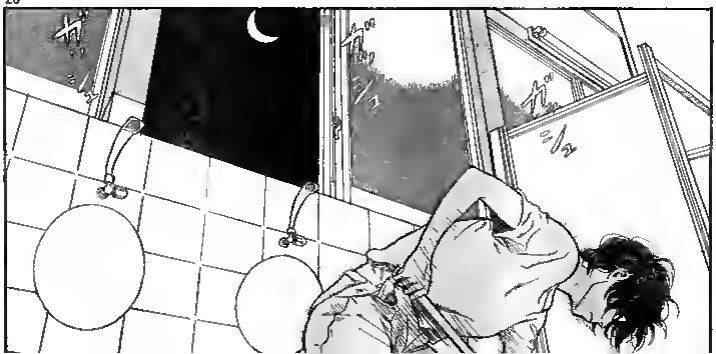
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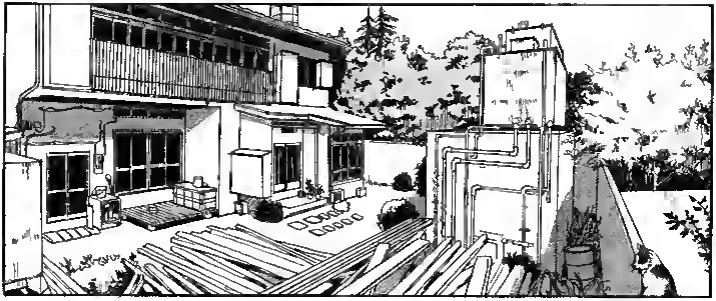
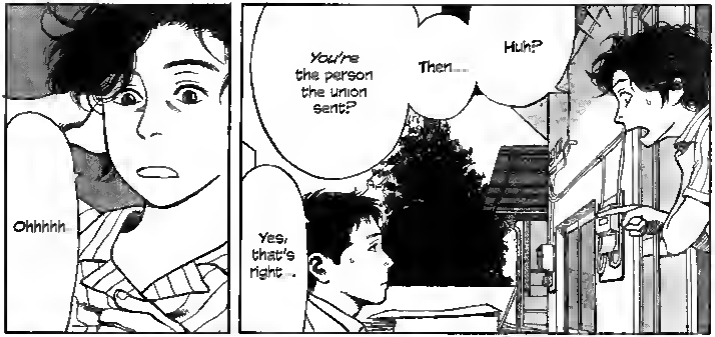


ARF
ARF!

mnnrrrnnm
ROWF!
ROWF!

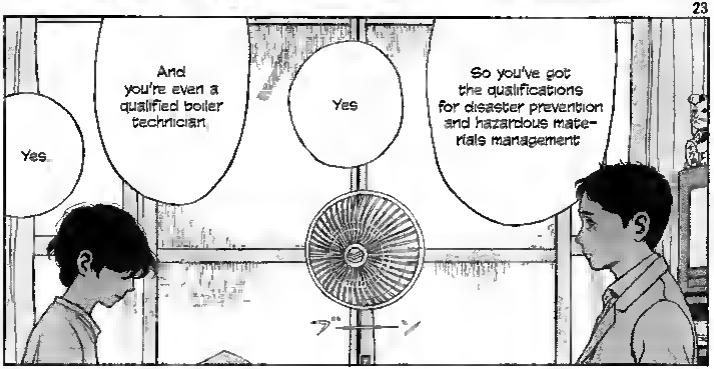
Kura!
RUFF
RUFF
RUFF
Kura,
be
quiet
WOOF!
WOOF!

WOOF!
ガラガラ
Geez, what are you barking for?
WHAT? WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?!
HUH?!
erm, hello
Uh,
ガタッ
I for got to lock the door
My name is Hori Comura-san from the Public Baths Union asked me to come.
and the door was open, so—
I rang the doorbell over and over, but no one answered.

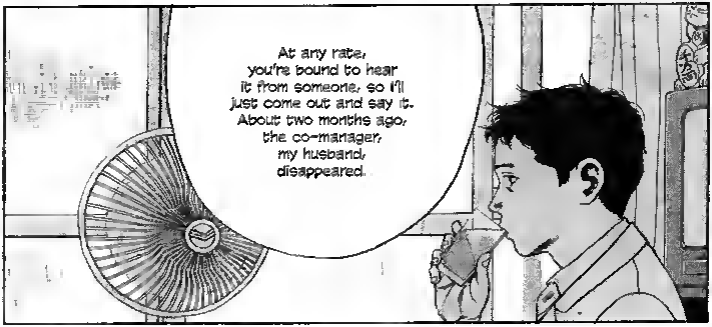

Ohhhhh
You're the person the union sent?
Then...
Huh?
Yes, that's right.

Hori Takayuki

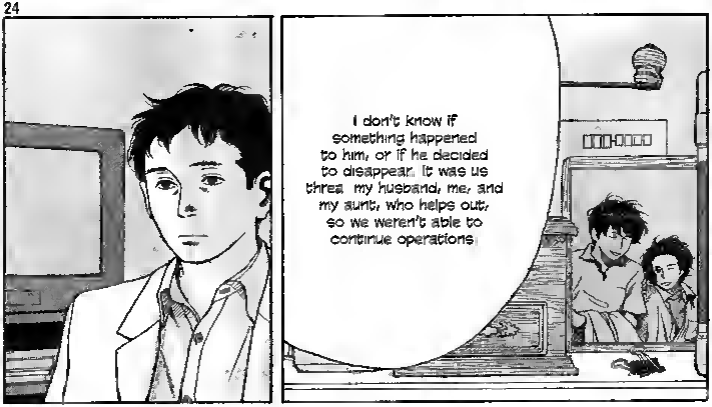
23

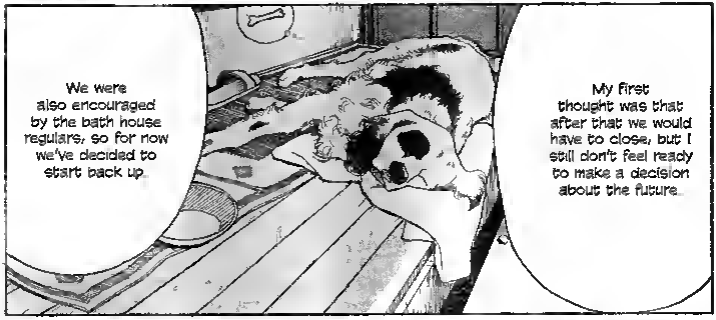

Yes.
And you're even a qualified boiler technician.
Yes
So you've got the qualifications for disaster prevention and hazardous materials management
ブーン

I imagine you've already heard this from Oomura-san, but I'm afraid this is just a temporary job. It's not going to be a long-term position.


At any rate, you're bound to hear it from someone, so I'll just come out and say it. About two months ago, the co-manager, my husband, disappeared.

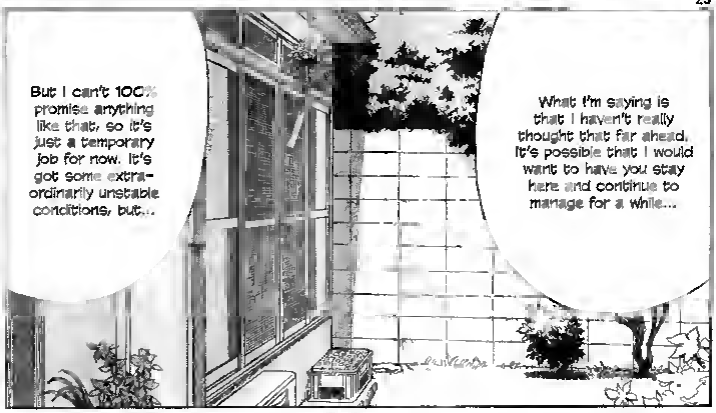
24


I don't know if something happened to him, or if he decided to disappear. It was us three: my husband, me, and my aunt, who helps out, so we weren't able to continue operations.

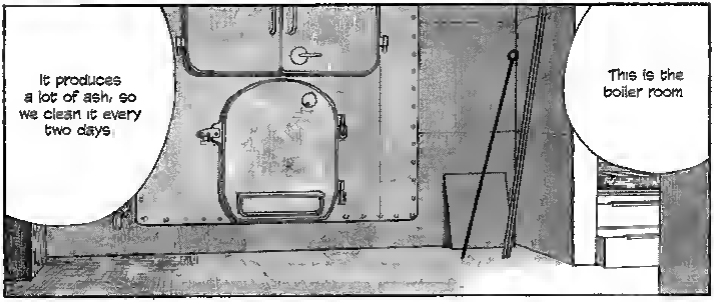

We were also encouraged by the bath house regulars, so for now we've decided to start back up.
My first thought was that after that we would have to close, but I still don't feel ready to make a decision about the future.

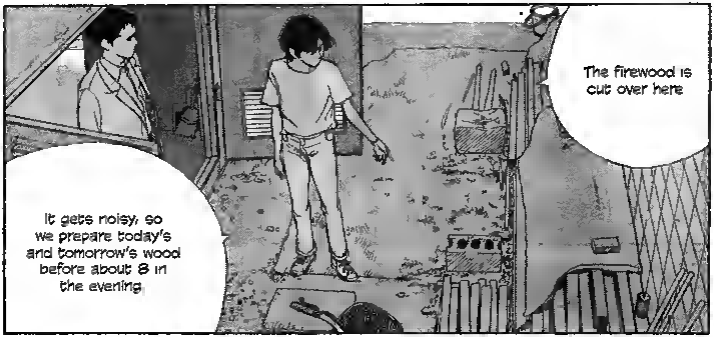
Even if he does come back, it's not like things could go back to the way they were before.
...No, that's not it.
So you plan on staying open while waiting for your husband to come back?

25


But I can't 100% promise anything like that, so it's just a temporary job for now. It's got some extraordinarily unstable conditions, but...
What I'm saying is that I haven't really thought that far ahead. It's possible that I would want to have you stay here and continue to manage for a while...

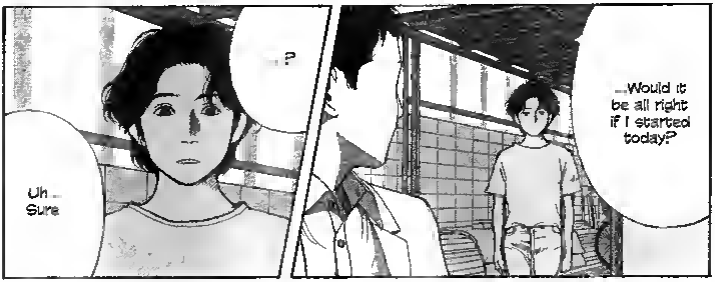
Could I take a look at the boiler room?
Um...
26
Watch your head


It produces a lot of ash, so we clean it every two days
This is the boiler room


It gets noisy, so we prepare today's and tomorrow's wood before about 8 in the evening
The firewood is cut over here

27

Um, it's already noon, so it's just about time
About what time do you start the fire?



Although she can't even decide to wait, all she can do is wait. When someone close is no longer there, what kind of actions can a person take?

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

NCIS

UNDERCURRENT

C. 01

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Translators for Yomimurashi (UNITA Yumi)
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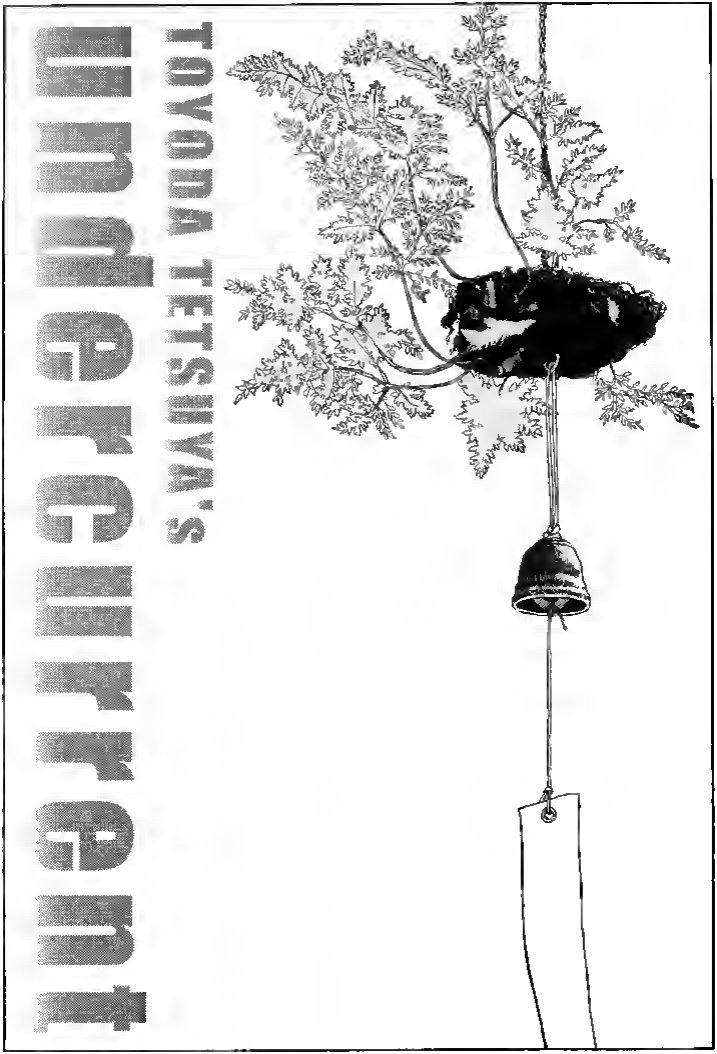
Adopted husbands. Sometimes when a family has only daughters, they will adopt one of their daughters husbands so that the family name has a chance to be passed on to the next generation. This is called mukoyoushi (婿養子).

-bou. This honorific (坊) is usually used when affectionately addressing young boys. They're probably punning on the kanabou (金棒) the big steel clad wooden staff oni carry.

Aunt Kyouka. Though Kanae calls her 'aunt', she is probably not blood related, but instead a longstanding family friend.

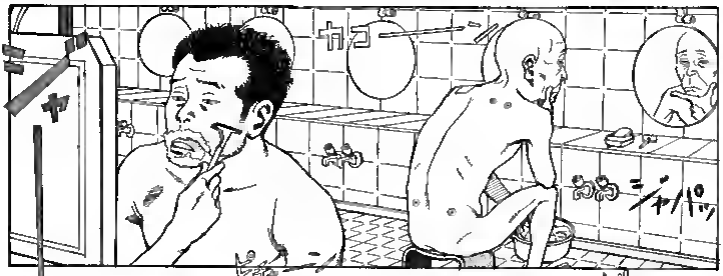
Under Front

Towoda Tetsuya's



A person close to you is suddenly gone,
and you can't even grasp the reason why

月乃湯

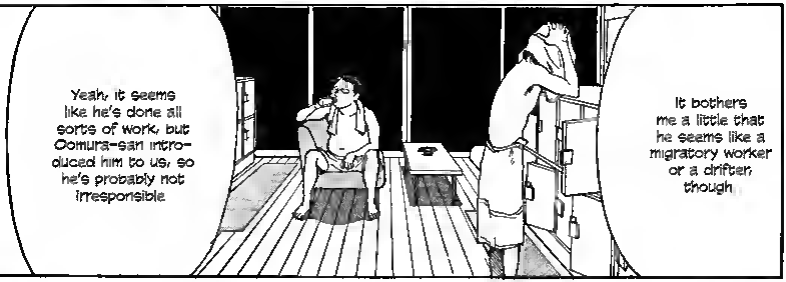

カコ
ニャパッ

ザワザワ

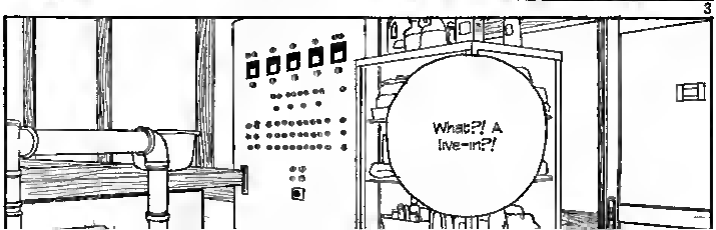
2

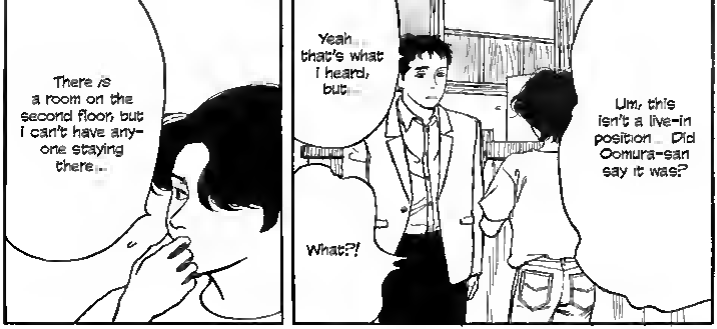
カコーン
Yeah, I thought it was the beginning of the end, but he's really helped out
Isn't it great that someone came to help so quickly?
営業案内
大人 12才以上 400
小人 6才以上12才未満 150

Yeah, and it seems like he's used to this kind of work, so he'll pick it up quickly.
He seems a little out-of-place, but he's diligent... So it's no big deal.


Yeah, it seems like he's done all sorts of work, but Oomura-san introduced him to us, so he's probably not irresponsible.
It bothers me a little that he seems like a migratory worker or a drifter, though.

Mm... About that...
By the way, where is he going to stay?

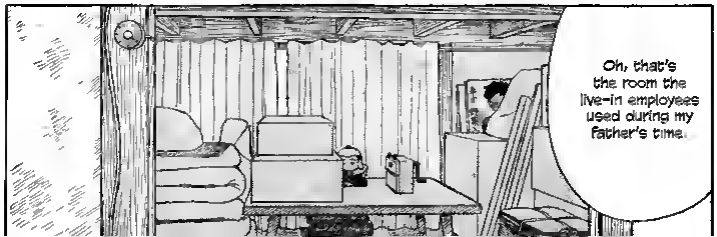

What?! A live-in?!

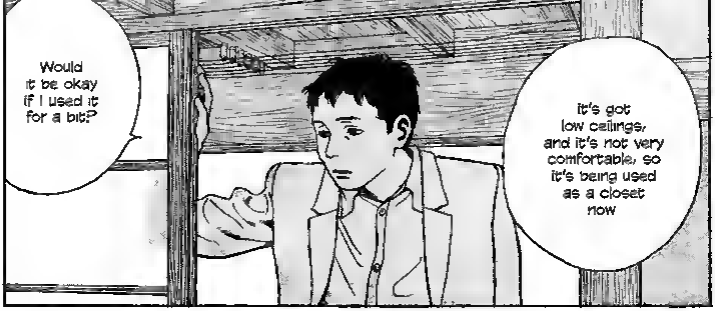

There IS a room on the second floor, but I can't have anyone staying there...
Yeah... that's what I heard, but...
What?!
Um, this isn't a live-in position... Did Oomura-san say it was?

What will we do? There's nowhere you can stay around here...

Huh?!
What's that over there?

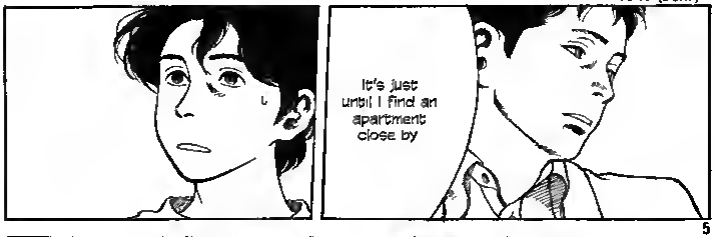
4


Oh, that's the room the live-in employees used during my father's time.


Would it be okay if I used it for a bit?
It's got low ceilings, and it's not very comfortable, so it's being used as a closet now

And it's above the boiler, so it gets really hot...
No problem.
That's all right, it's just me...
Huh? But it's only a 4-tatami room...

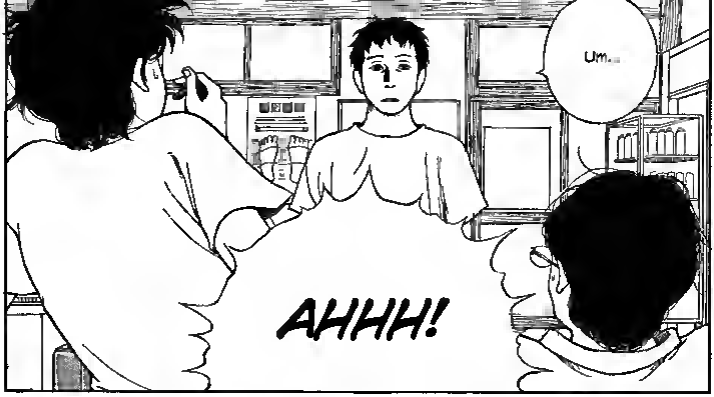
~70 ft² (6.5m²)


It's just until I find an apartment close by

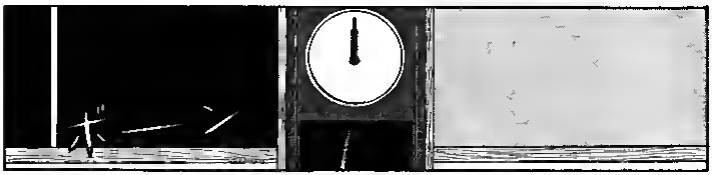
5

Yeah... Well, that's how it is.
What?! Then that guy is going to live here starting tonight?!

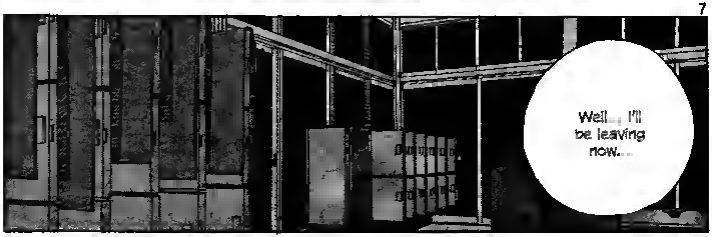
It can't be helped. He's got nowhere to stay right now.
NOWHERE TO STAY? IS IT *NORMAL* FOR A LIVE-IN TO STAY IN A SINGLE WOMAN'S HOUSE?!
WHA— HOLD ON! YOU CAN'T *DO* THAT!
The room's got a lock.
THAT'S *NOT* WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!
SECOND FLOOR? CLIMB UP THE STAIRS AND YOU'RE THERE!
You know...
I sleep on the second floor, so there's no problem
6
I'M SAYING THIS AS A LONGTIME EMPLOYEE!
YOU'RE BEING PRETTY RUDE TO HORI-SAN BY MAKING THOSE KINDS OF ASSUMPTIONS!


Um...
AHHH!

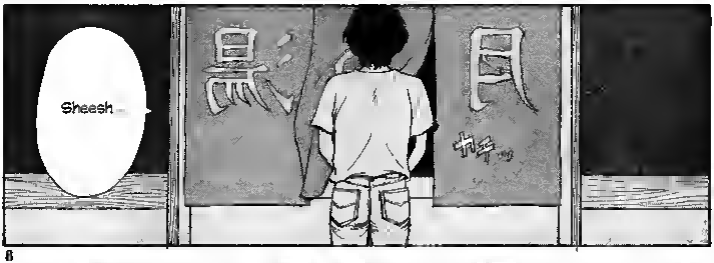
There are a couple empty vending machines, so I thought I might fill them up...
Uh, yes, I'll take care of it.
ガチャ
営業案内

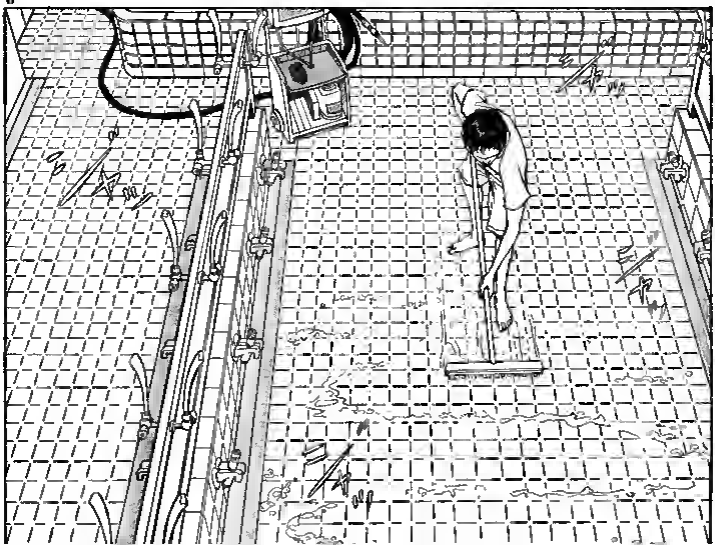

ボーン

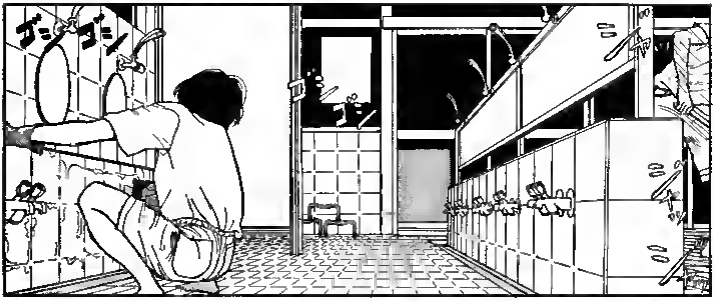
7

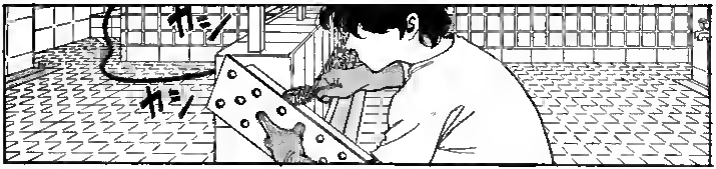

Well... I'll be leaving now...

GOOD NIGHT!
What the hell are you talking about?
Don't get desperate just because Satoru hasn't come back.
Okay, okay.
If something happens, call me right away.
Okay, okay
Make sure you be really careful.


Sheesh...







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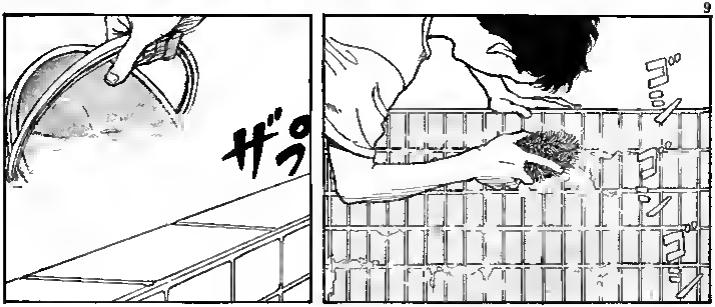

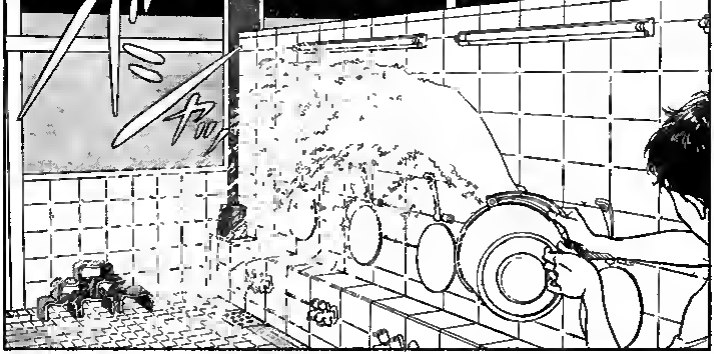

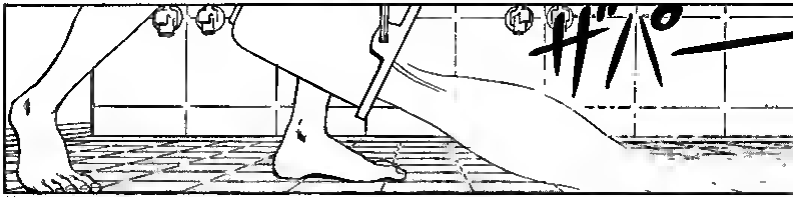

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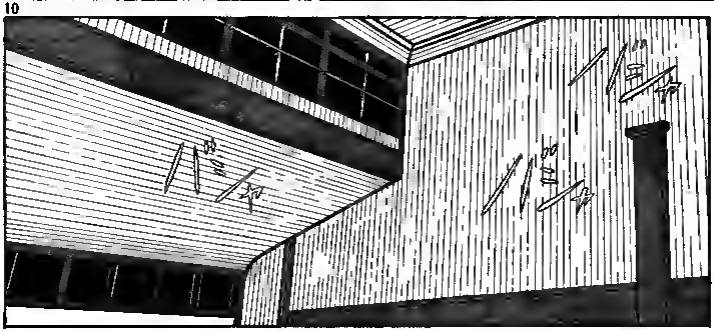
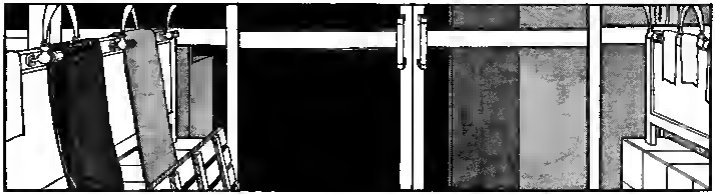
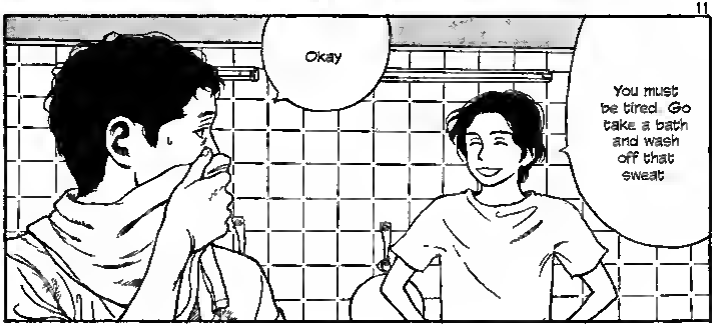


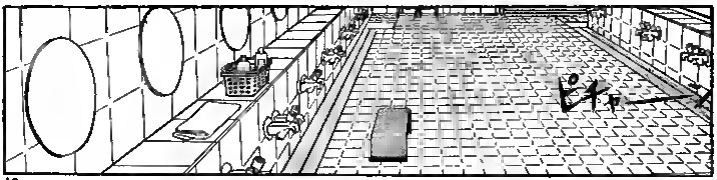


Okay.
Good work. That's all for today.

11


Okay
You must be tired. Go take a bath and wash off that sweat

Okay.
Um... I'm going to the women's side, so...



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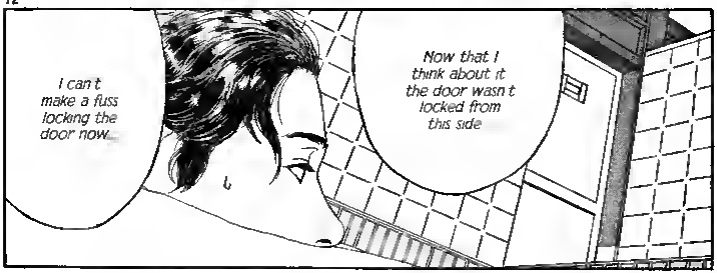

I can't make a fuss locking the door now...
Now that I think about it the door wasn't locked from this side...

He could come from the front or the back and it'd be like this
Besides even if he came through the changing room there'd be nothing I could do
Yeah so then I guess it really doesn't matter
Who the heck am I explaining this to?
It's like having a tiger in front of you and a wolf behind you
Ma'am?
Y-YES?!
13
Should I drain the water when I get out?

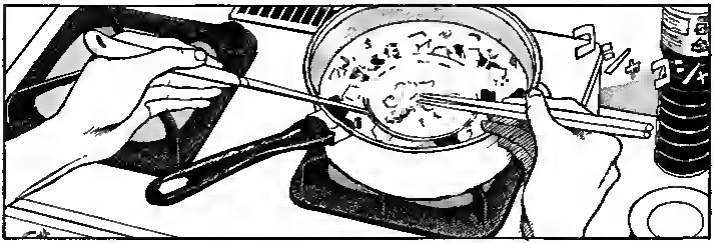
Uh, I'll be draining it before I scrub it tomorrow, so don't worry about it.
All right
ピチャ
ピチャ
……
ピチャ

14

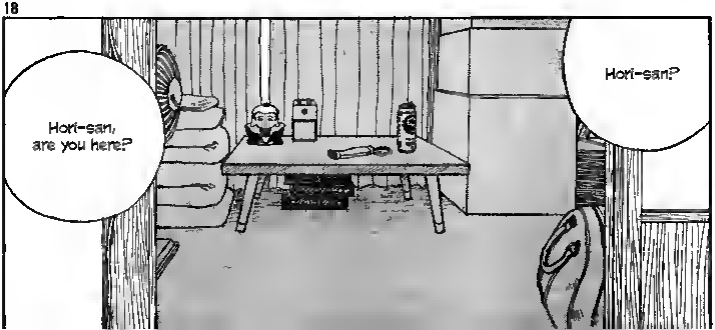
What could make you that sad?
What happened? Why are you crying?

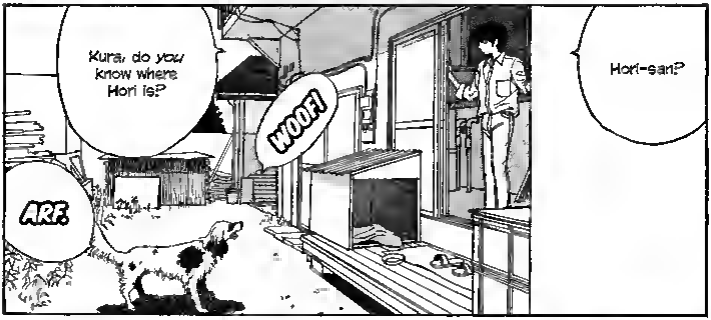
There's nothing to be so sad about

It's fine...
Don't cry
Come on.



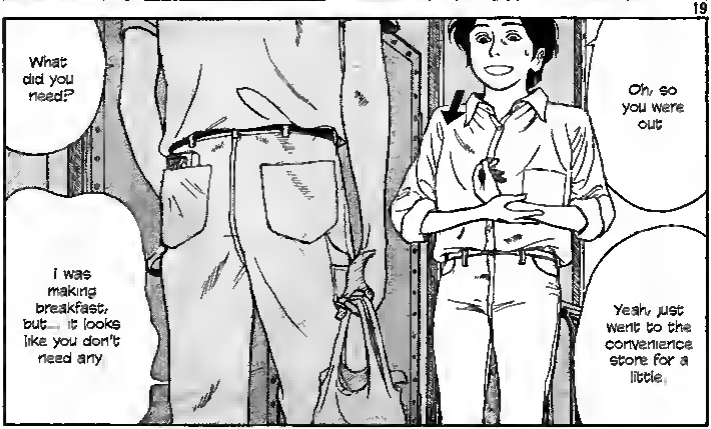
Now then.
Mmm

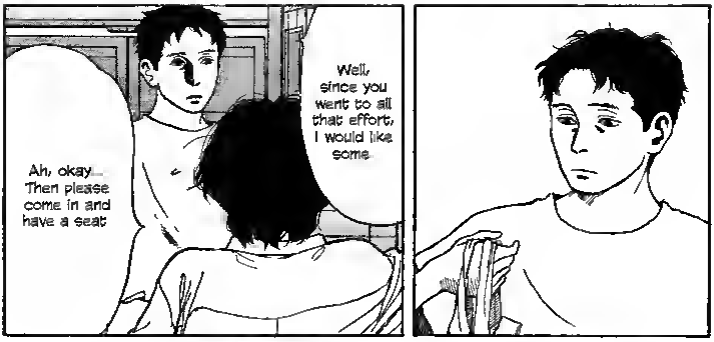

Hori-san, are you here?
Hori-san?

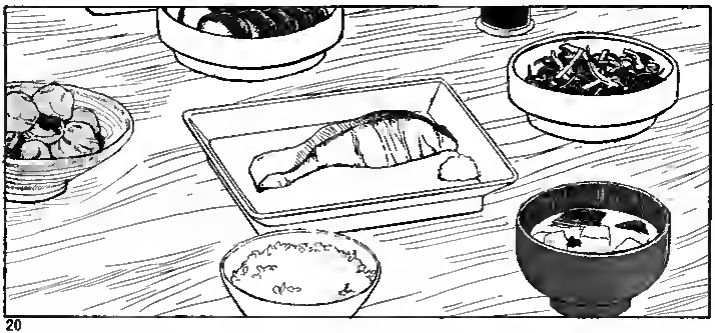

Kura, do you know where Hori is?
WOOF!
ARF.
Hori-san?

Oh!
Hori-saaan!

19


What did you need?
I was making breakfast, but... it looks like you don't need any
Oh, so you were out
Yeah, just went to the convenience store for a little.


Ah, okay... Then please come in and have a seat
Well, since you went to all that effort, I would like some



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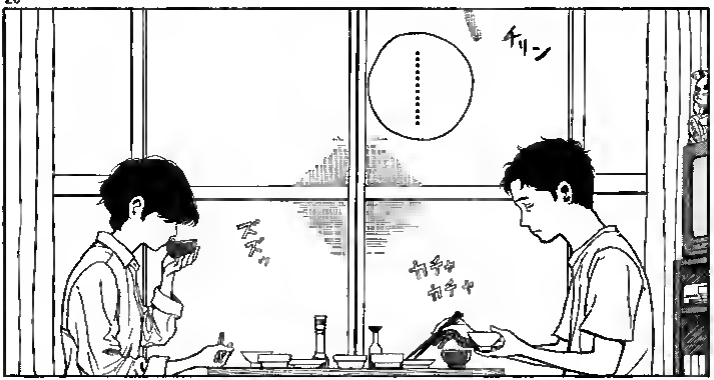
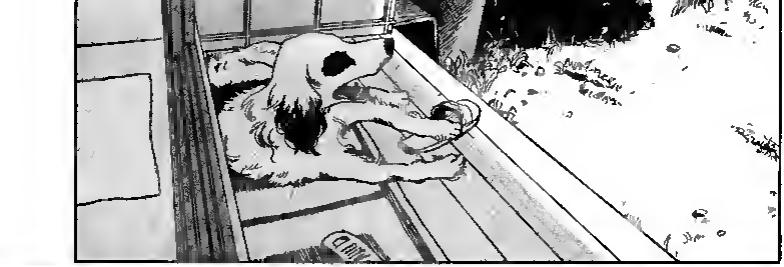
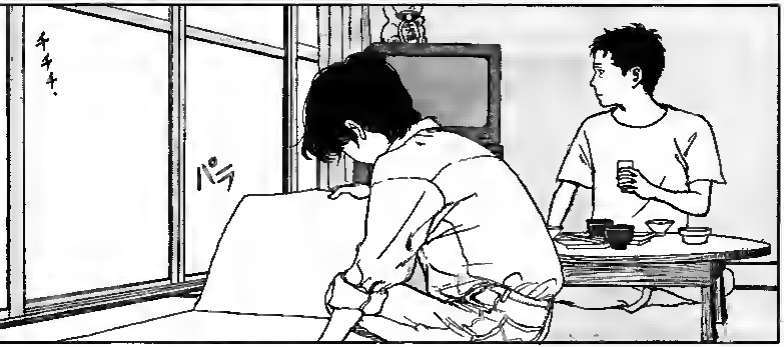

チリン
……

Um...
Um... Would you like seconds?
Ah, no, it's nothing, but...
I insist.
No, no, go ahead!
You first
Um... You don't have to prepare my breakfast for me.
Ah.
Okay.
...Please...
21
So... What were you about to say?
ｺﾄﾄﾄ

But it's no extra effort to make one more portion.
I'll take care of myself in the morning, so don't trouble yourself.
If you're saying you want to do your own thing in the morning, that's different, though.
Then it's no trouble at all. It's not much, but compared to what you can get from the convenience store...
No, that's not what I meant...
22
Oh, no, that's not what I was getting at...
...I see. I'll find an apartment as soon as I can.
It'll just be until you move into an apartment, anyway.
...But please do so.





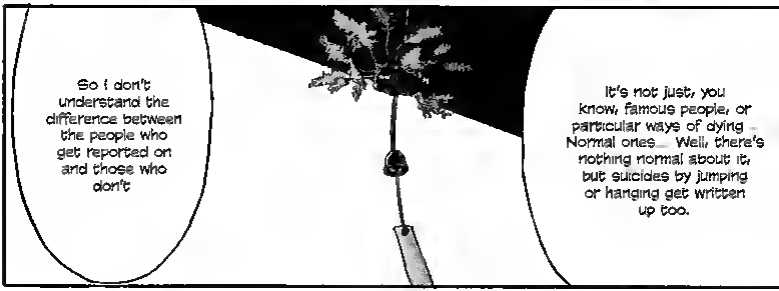
JR Main Line, Male jumper

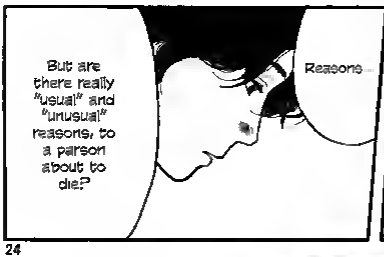
HINO—On the 21st, around 8:20 AM, a man leapt in front of a high-speed train entering the platform at the JR Main Line Toyoda Station in Hino City and was killed. Because of this incident, service was suspended for around 30 minutes affecting approximately 22,000 people. The police are currently investigating his identity.

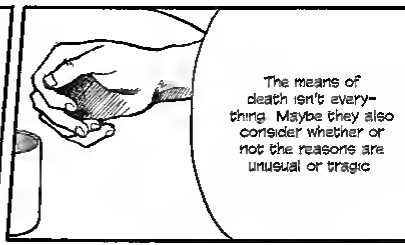
23

Hmm?
It's not like everyone who commits suicide is in the news, right?
What distinguishes the suicides that make it into the newspaper from those that don't?

Yeah, that's true... Close to a hundred people die that way every day, so they can't report on all of them.

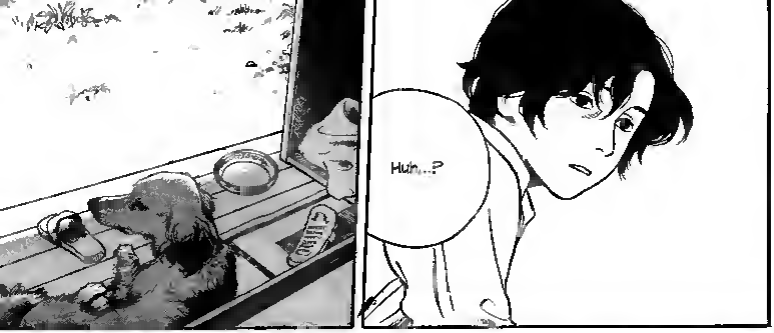

So I don't understand the difference between the people who get reported on and those who don't
It's not just, you know, famous people, or particular ways of dying... Normal ones... Well, there's nothing normal about it, but suicides by jumping or hanging get written up too.


But are there really "usual" and "unusual" reasons, to a person about to die?
Reasons...


The means of death isn't everything. Maybe they also consider whether or not the reasons are unusual or tragic

24

Ma'am, have you ever thought that you wanted to die?

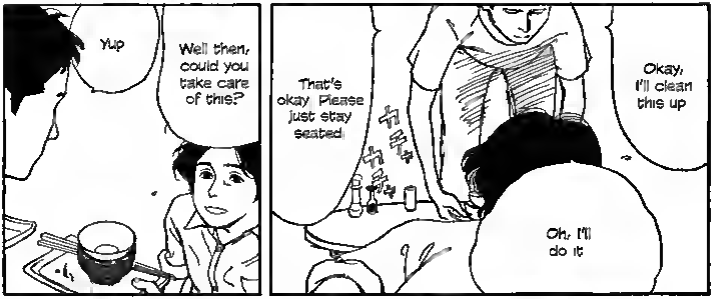

Huh...?

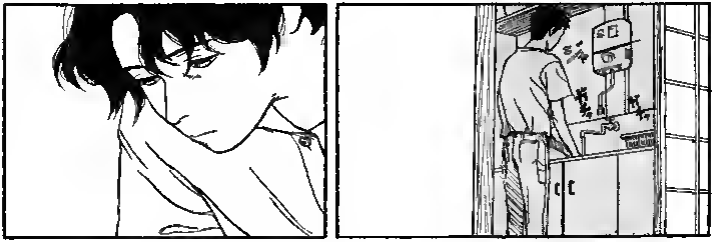
Suicide
Dying...
Well...
Have I...?
.....

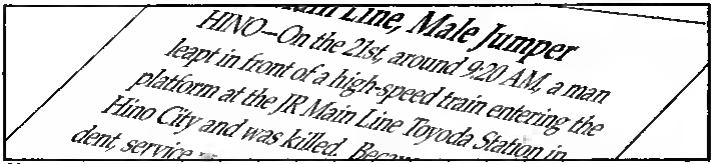
It's not really something you need to apologize for
Sorry, I'm not really sure...

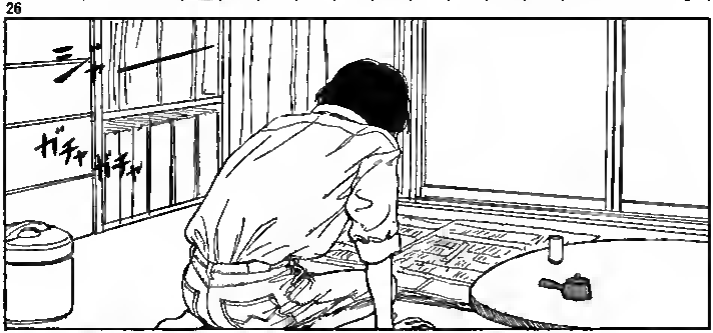
No...
Sorry for asking you something strange...

UNDERCURRENT
アンダーカレント






Line, Male Jumper
HINO—On the 21st, around 9:20 AM, a man
leapt in front of a high-speed train entering the
platform at the JR Main Line Toyoda Station in
Hino City and was killed. Becau
dent, service



If he didn't die and wasn't in an accident then he's disappeared. Although none of these are preferable she's always searching for some kind of sign

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UNDERCURRENT

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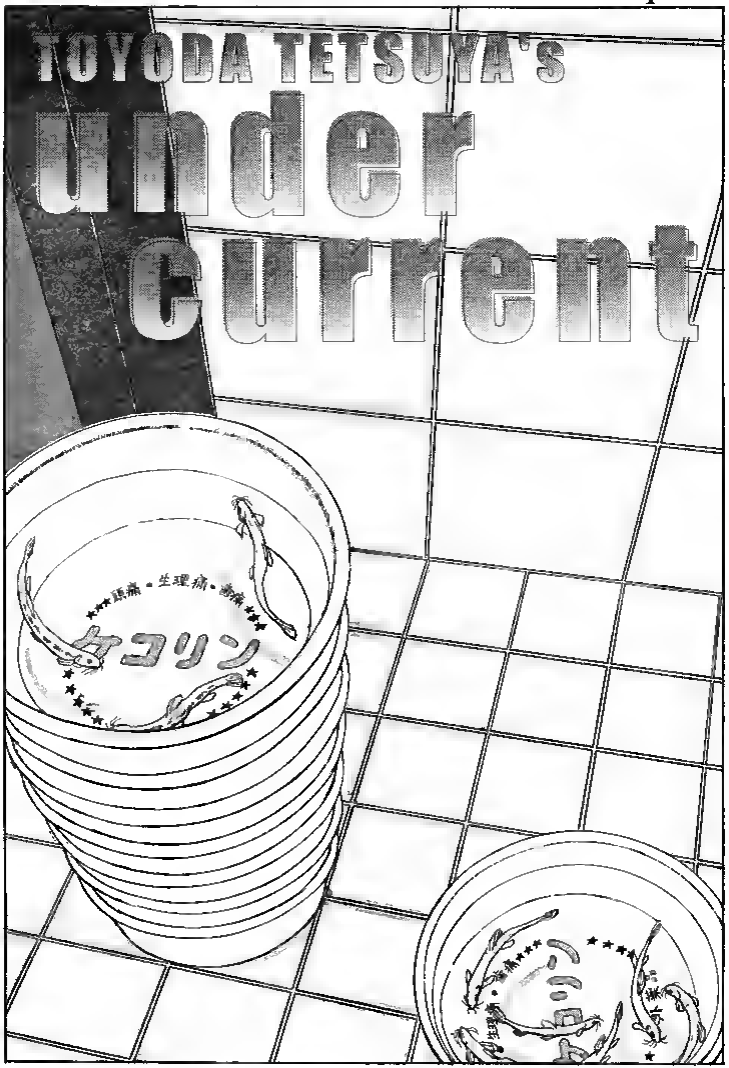
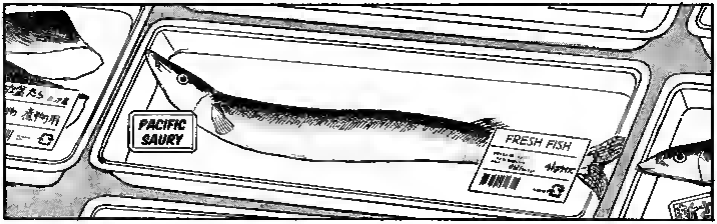
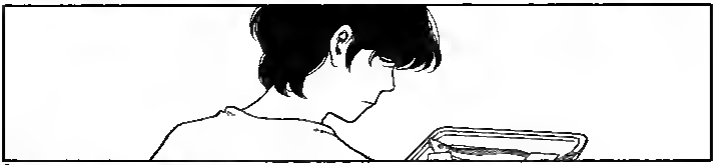


Unable to neither wait nor give up, she is simply petrified.

(These fish are loaches.)





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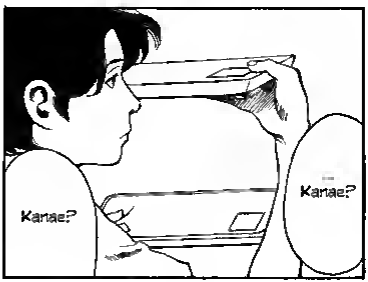
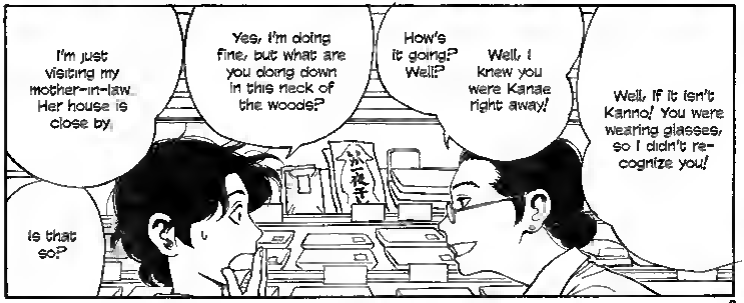


Ah, I knew it! It's Kanae!
Um...
. Kanno?
Kanno?!


Well, if it isn't Kanno! You were wearing glasses, so I didn't recognize you!
Well, I knew you were Kanae right away!
How's it going!? Well!?
Yes, I'm doing fine, but what are you doing down in this neck of the woods?
I'm just visiting my mother-in-law. Her house is close by.
Is that so?

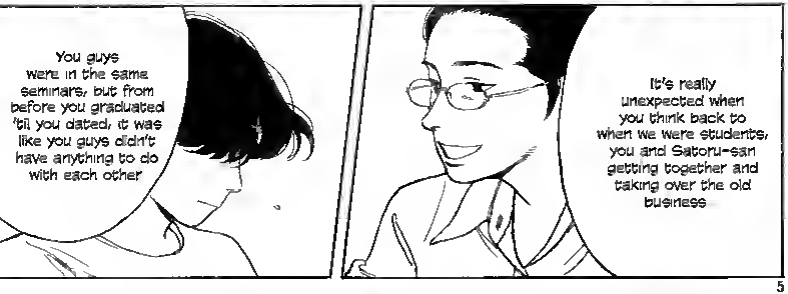
What— Is this your kid?! You gave birth?
Yeah! What kind of question is that?!
Hey, you got some free time? Let's go have some tea somewhere!
Uh, yeah, okay.
2F

Oh, when your father passed away, I didn't even go to the funeral Sorry about that
Yeah... it's already been that long
That's right, I haven't seen you since your wedding...? Four years...? It's been four years now.
Nah, it's okay

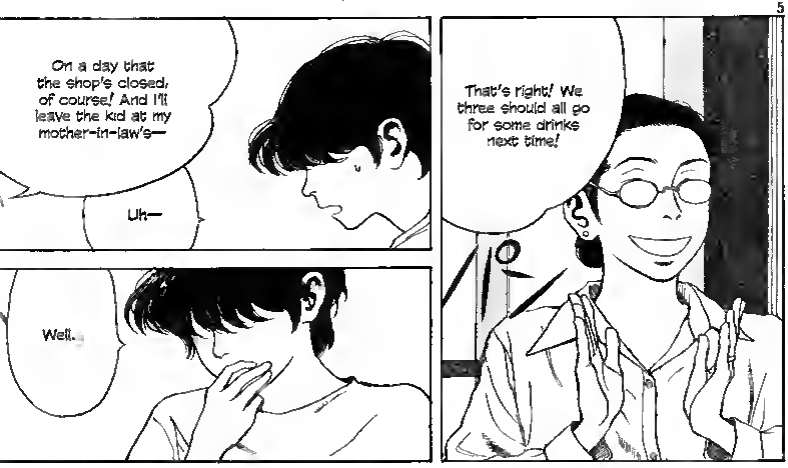
When was your baby born?
I was also working up until I gave birth to this kiddo, so I was really busy
November last year, so ten months ago almost

The stage name of Machida Kou a punk rockin

It's been four years, huh? He's probably completely used to being the head of the batch-house now.
Ah... Yeah, he's fine...

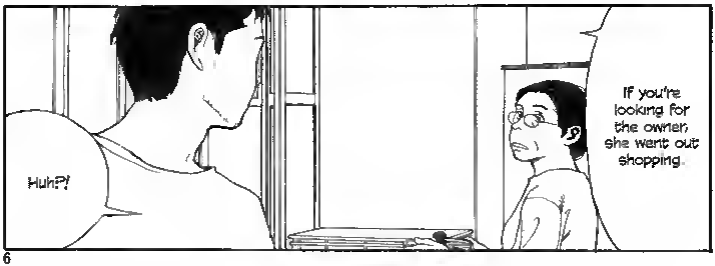

You guys were in the same seminars, but from before you graduated 'til you dated, it was like you guys didn't have anything to do with each other
It's really unexpected when you think back to when we were students, you and Satoru-san getting together and taking over the old business

5


On a day that the shop's closed, of course! And I'll leave the kid at my mother-in-law's—
Uh—
That's right! We three should all go for some drinks next time!
Well...

Kana-chan?
Kana-chan—

Is she not here?
Kana-chaaan—


Huh?!
If you're looking for the owner, she went out shopping.

6

Ah.
Well, I received some loaches, but the people in my household can't eat them, so I thought maybe someone might want them at Kana-chan's.
What is it?

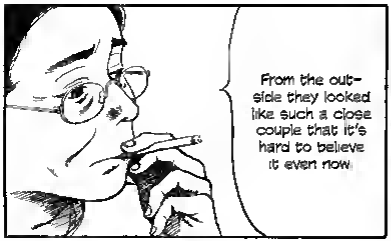
Where are you from?
Huh?
I enjoy eating them too, but I'm no good at *cooking* them, so it'd be a bit of a waste, wouldn't it?
Ah
Before he left he didn't seem like he was going to— did he?
Nothing.
After that he didn't contact you at all? No letters or anything?
Not at all
. I had no idea
The morning he went on the union trip, he took his bag and left the house as he did normally.

They said he said he was going to buy a souvenir, and after he left, nobody saw him.
Yes, so . . isn't there a man by that name who's been admitted to your hospital...?!
...Yes
...Okay.
Well, I'll be back.
Kana-chan, get a little rest. I'll take care of the phone for you.
What was your husband wearing when he left?
...A light blue shirt and beige pants...
I'm fine... I'm fine.

huh?
Still nothing new in the case.
Yeah
Is that so...
Yes, I understand
Yes
No... Thank you very much.
I MEAN, IF HE'S ALIVE, THEN WHY HASN'T HE CONTACTED ME?! WHY'D HE LEAVE WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING?!
WHY DIDN'T HE TELL ME ANYTHING?! WHY?! WHY?!
Kana-chan.
ドドドドド

ドドドドドドドド
ガラ
ガラ

Two years ago, the old head of the family passed on, and after that those two were left to make good together


From the outside they looked like such a close couple that it's hard to believe it even now

When Kana-chan said she was going to take over here, Saboru-san quit his job and even became an adopted husband so they could work together, but ——

10

Sorry
...You smoke some strong stuff, huh?

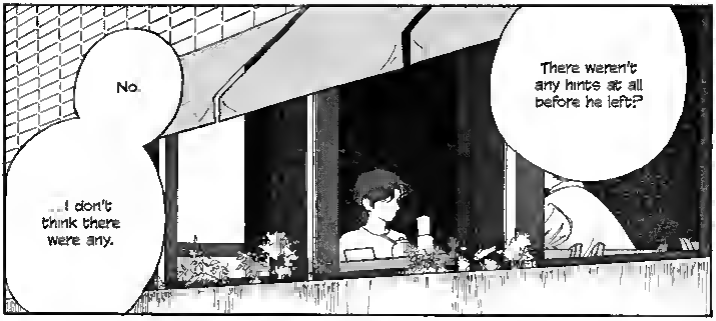
An accident...
That can't be it
If that were the case,
word would have gotten
back to the police
somehow

Besides,
he didn't really
have any reason to
commit suicide,
did he?
Suicide...
Sorry... But if it
were suicide, unless he
chose somewhere really
unusual, it probably
would've been
discovered.

...I've already
considered all sorts
of possibilities, but no
matter how I look at it,
I can't stop thinking
that he left of
his own will.

11

maybe he
got tired of me,
maybe he got tired
of working at the
bathhouse...
Maybe there
was someone else
he liked, maybe there
was something else
he wanted to do,


No.
...I don't think there were any.
There weren't any hints at all before he left?

It *was* a shock, but it was so sudden that it doesn't feel like it's real at all.
Since then, I've been trying to remember the times when I was with Satoru-san, but I still feel a little dazed...

12

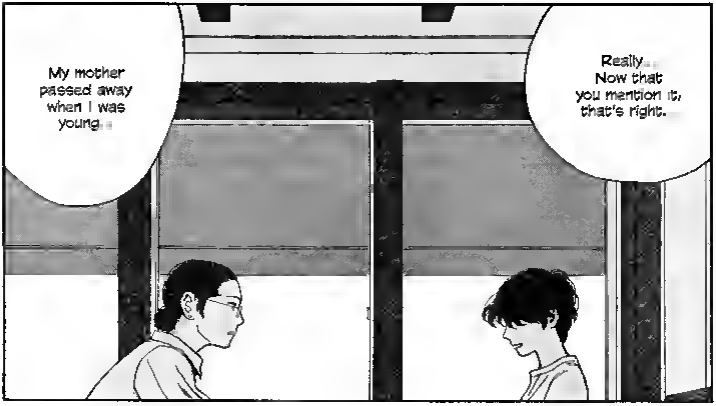
If I was the one who was wrong, if because of me he went through something painful...
I can think about it all day.
...If it was wrong to get married to me...

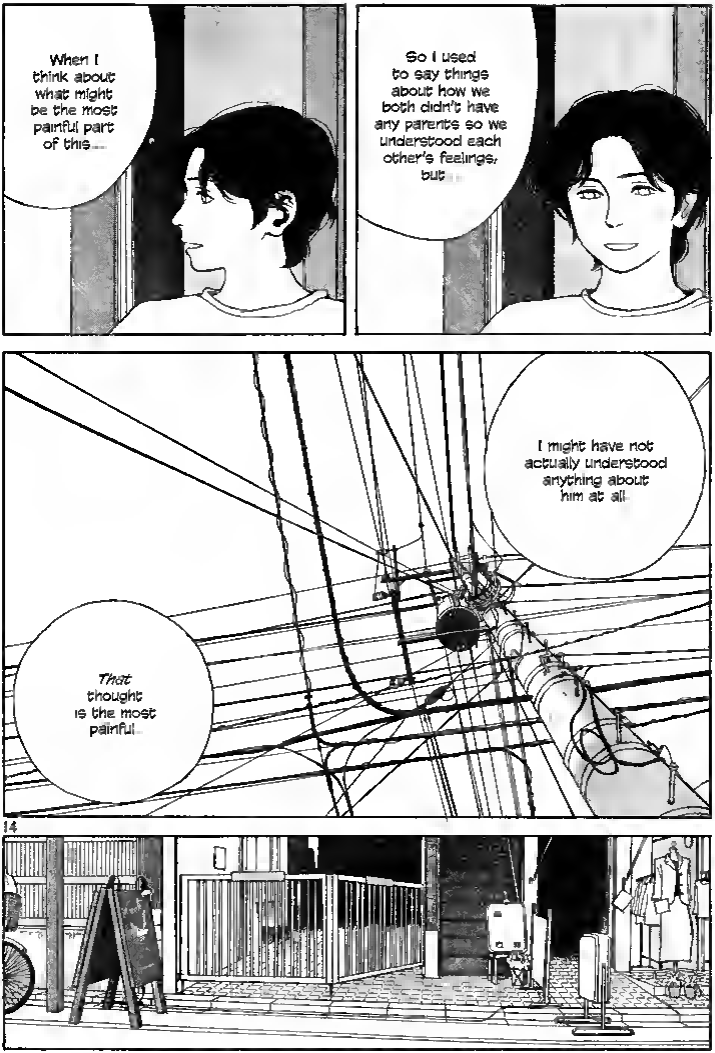
It's difficult to reconcile the disappearance with the images of Satoru-san inside me.
He got along well with people, he was helpful, he was responsible...

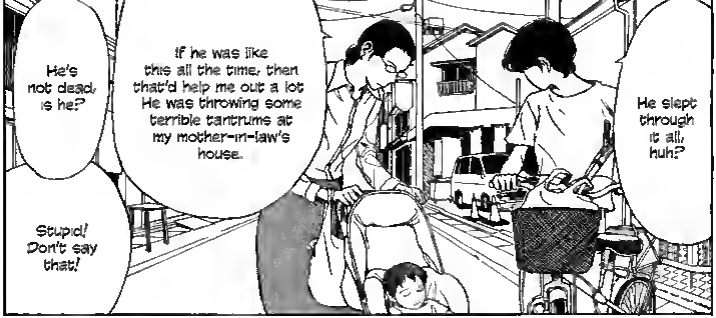
NO!
You can't think about it like that, because you still don't know anything!
Besides, no matter what the reason, to do something like hide one's whereabouts and not even leave a note... That's uncalled for, isn't it!

What about his parents? He didn't contact his family at all?
He was orphaned in a traffic accident. He doesn't have any parents.

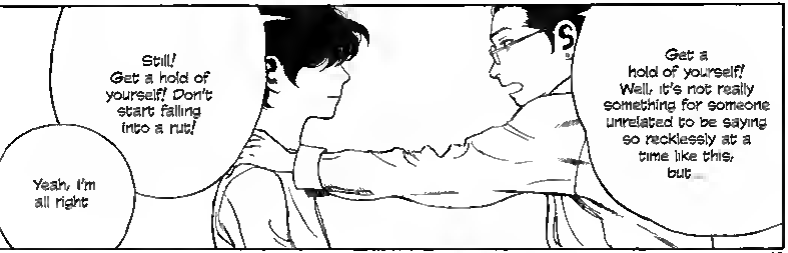
13


Really... Now that you mention it, that's right.
My mother passed away when I was young...


When I think about what might be the most painful part of this...
So I used to say things about how we both didn't have any parents so we understood each other's feelings, but...
I might have not actually understood anything about him at all
That thought is the most painful...
14


He's not dead, is he?
If he was like this all the time, then that'd help me out a lot. He was throwing some terrible tantrums at my mother-in-law's house.
He slept through it all, huh?
Stupid! Don't say that!

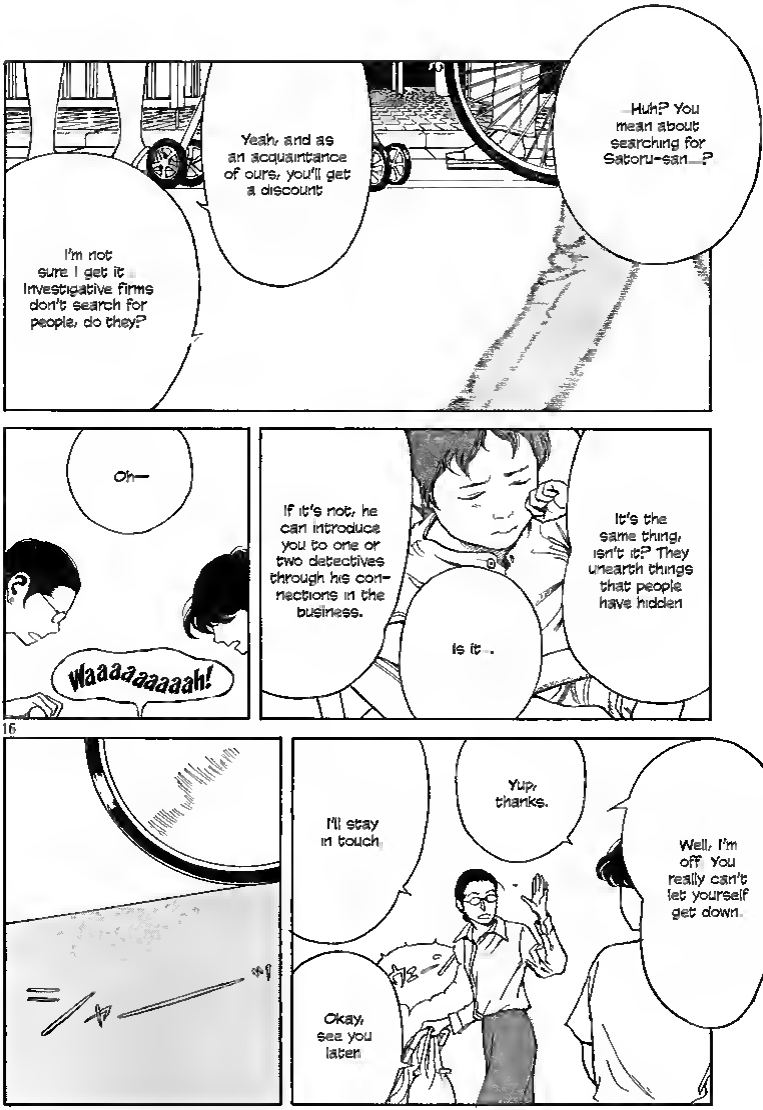
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
Sorry about this. Even though it's been so long since we met, our conversation turned out a little strange...


Still! Get a hold of yourself! Don't start falling into a rut!
Yeah, I'm all right
Get a hold of yourself! Well, it's not really something for someone unrelated to be saying so recklessly at a time like this, but...

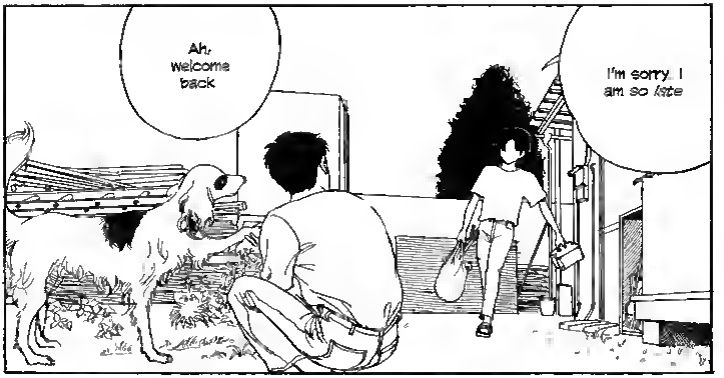
15

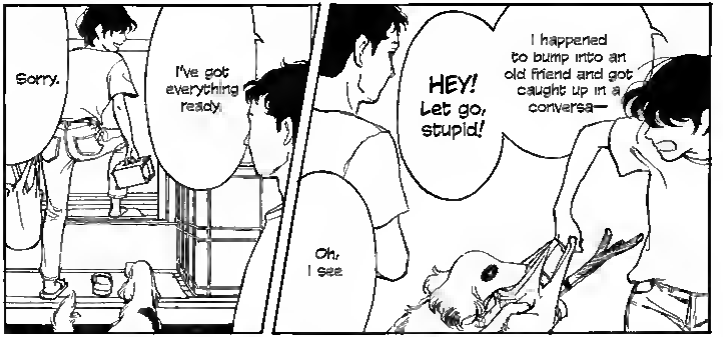
That's right. I don't really know what he's working on right now, but he's in Hokkaido.
Your husband works at an investigative firm, doesn't he?

This is just the sort of thing where, if my husband were around, he might be of some use.

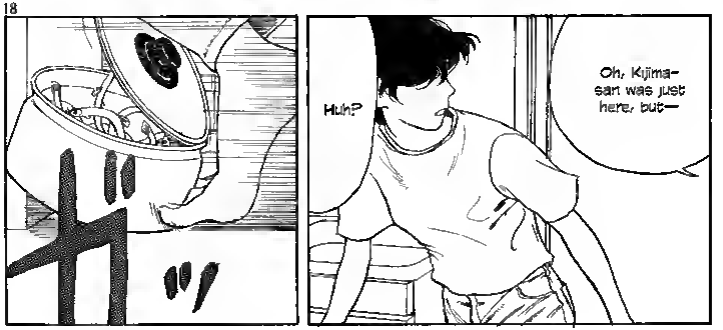

...Huh? You mean about searching for Satoru-san...?
Yeah, and as an acquaintance of ours, you'll get a discount
I'm not sure I get it. Investigative firms don't search for people, do they?
It's the same thing, isn't it? They unearth things that people have hidden
If it's not, he can introduce you to one or two detectives through his connections in the business.
Is it...
Oh—
Waaaaaaaaah!
Yup, thanks.
I'll stay in touch
Well, I'm off. You really can't let yourself get down.
Okay, see you later.

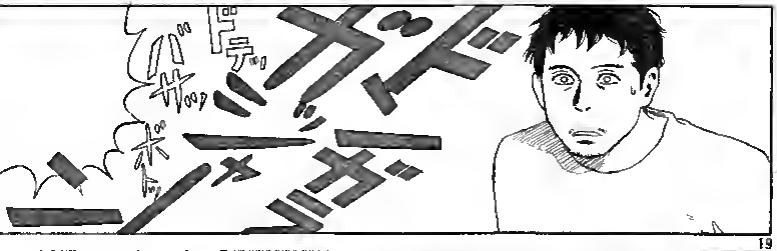
Huh
I forgot to buy the fish.


Ah, welcome back
I'm sorry. I am so late


Sorry.
I've got everything ready.
Oh, I see
HEY! Let go, stupid!
I happened to bump into an old friend and got caught up in a conversa—

18


Huh?
Oh, Kijima-san was just here, but—

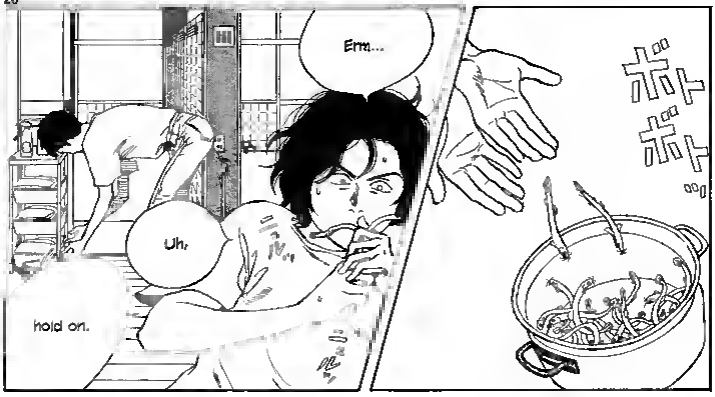


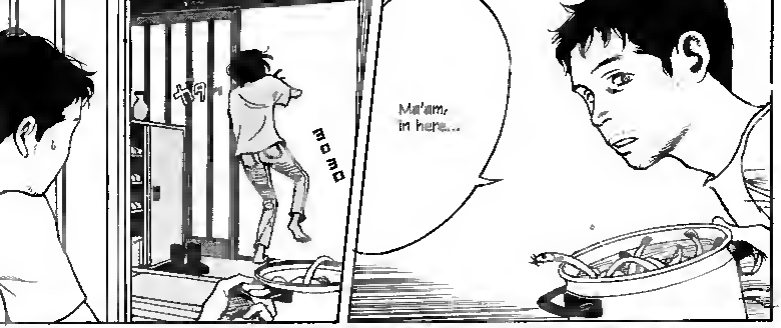
19

They're loaches.
AGH! WHAT IS ALL THIS?!

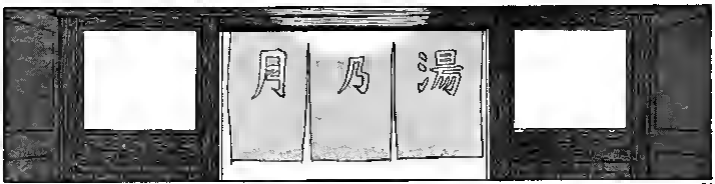
The pot! Get them back in the pot!
ドタドタ
EEEK! THEY GOT INSIDE!

20


Erm...
Uh,
hold on.
ボトボト

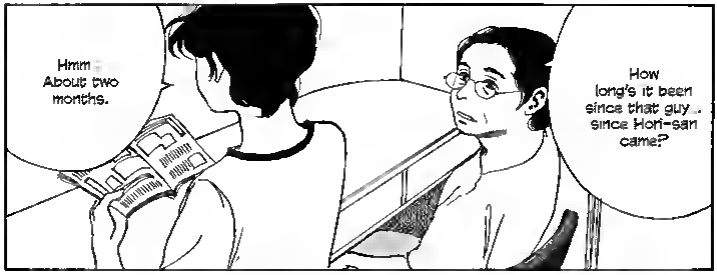

Ma'am, in here...

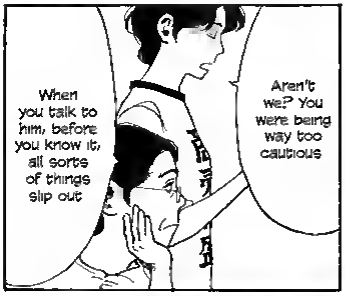
ASK THE LOACHES!
Where are you going?


月乃湯

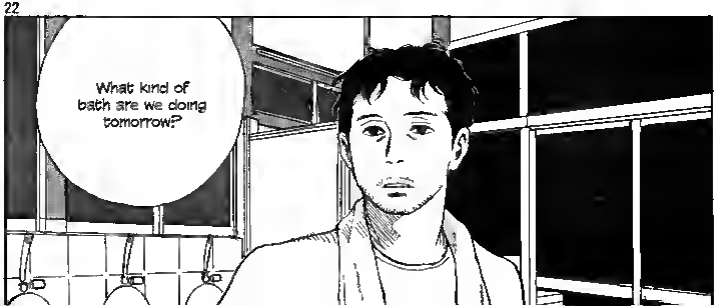
21

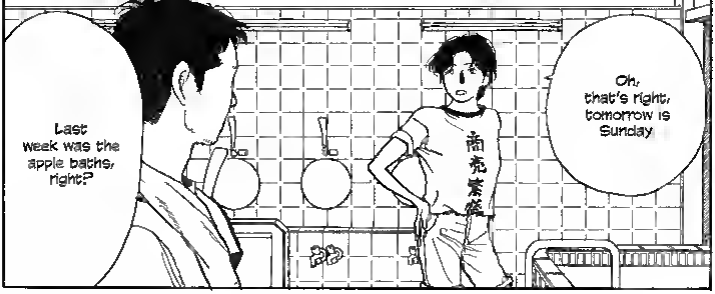
Did you eat the loaches?
No, not yet
Oh Really? You smell like them, so—
Let's not talk about it

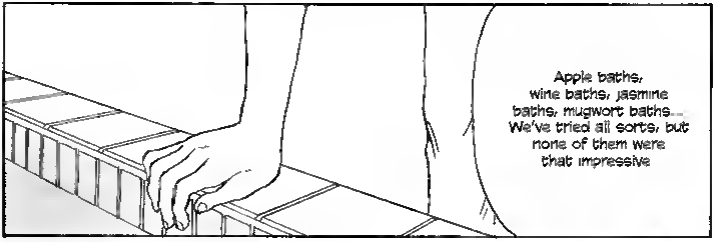

How long's it been since that guy... since Hori-san came?
Hmm... About two months.


At first he seemed a bit suspicious, but...
Even though he's not all that sociable, doesn't it feel like we're totally used to him?
Aren't we? You were being way too cautious
When you talk to him, before you know it, all sorts of things slip out

...What? Just what do you mean by, "all sorts of things slip out"?
Er... Nothing, really...


What kind of bath are we doing tomorrow?


Last week was the apple baths, right?
Oh, that's right, tomorrow is Sunday


Apple baths, wine baths, jasmine baths, mugwort baths... We've tried all sorts, but none of them were that impressive

Aren't there any good ones...?

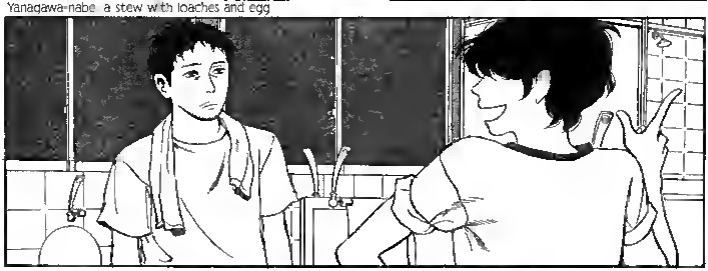
23

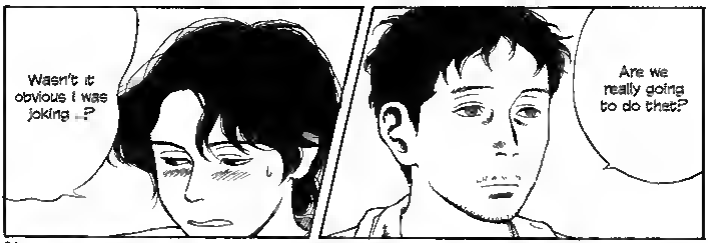
LOACH BATHS!
Doesn't it sound interesting?
Huh?
Hey! How about if we put loaches in them?

Plus, if we just add some egg, it'll be Yanagawa baths! It'll be a pain to clean, though

They'd squirm around in the water— wouldn't the kids love it? And if they get cooked, then the customers can just eat them!

Yanagawa-nabe: a stew with loaches and egg





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QC: CassiusOS
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UNDERCURRENT

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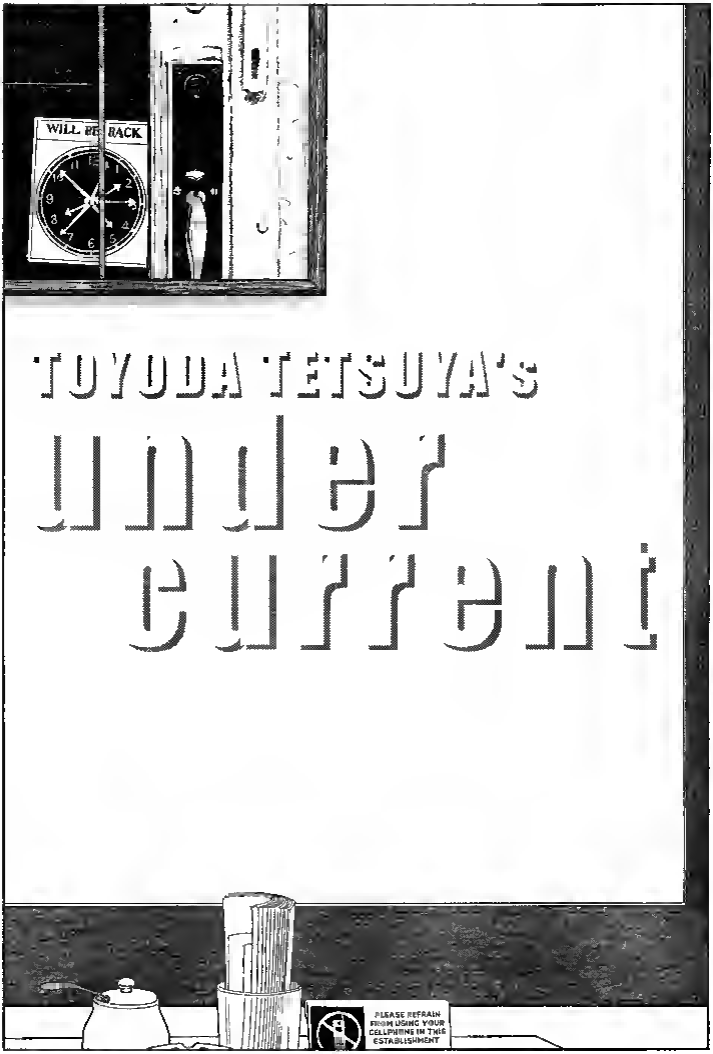
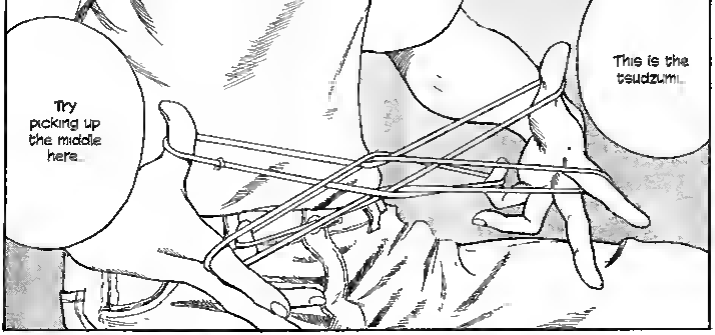
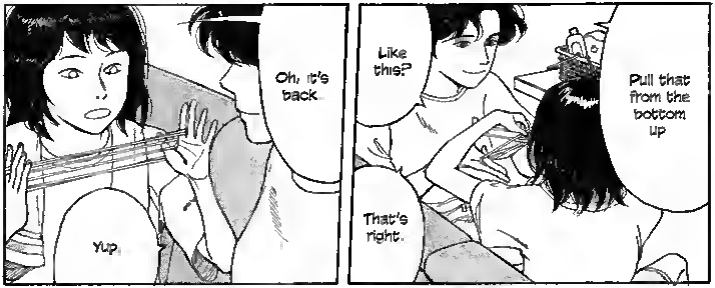


TOYODA TETSUYA's

under current

She understood what she had only after losing it
But isn't that how it is for everyone?


This is the tsudzumi.
Try picking up the middle here.


Oh, it's back.
Yup.
Like this?
That's right.
Pull that from the bottom up

RIIING
RIIING
Oh, there's the phone
Bunbuku chagama
It's called the bunbuku chagama

2

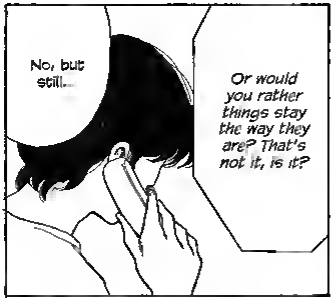
トゥルルルル
Good night, be careful on the way back.
Well, see you later, good night—

Yes.
Yes.
Huh? A detective?!
Oh, Kanno? Yes, I'm fine
Hello, you've reached Tsuki no Yu
Yeah, my husband's place doesn't search for people after all, and this guy seems to be a really old acquaintance.
This guy used to work at a detective agency—one of the big ones.

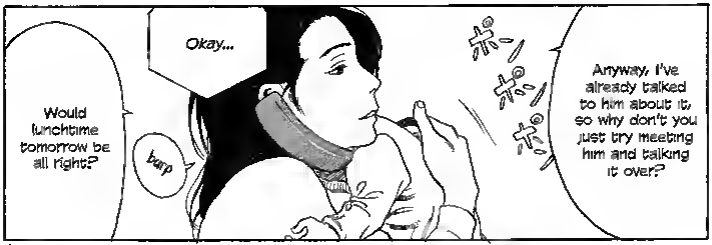
3

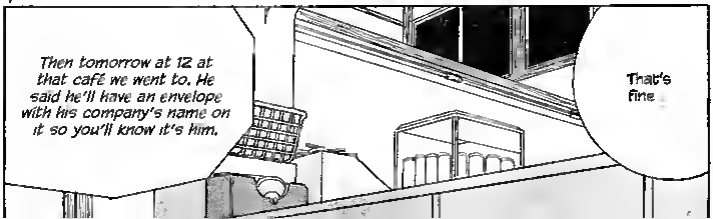
But it's got to cost a lot of money...
You can't count on those police. An adult's gone missing? There are countless people like that. They won't do a thing for you if it doesn't smell like foul play.
Oh, don't worry about that
Um...
I've already requested an investigation by the police, so, I mean...

Wait, I can't just—
Thank you for stopping by!
Good night
This guy seems to have borrowed a lot from my husband, so he said he'll work for you if you just cover his expenses.
It'll be fine. Don't worry about it.
営業案内

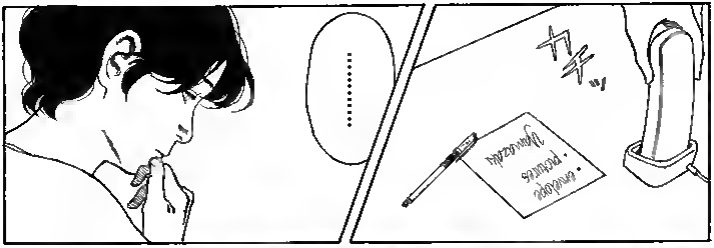

No, but still...
Or would you rather things stay the way they are? That's not it, is it?

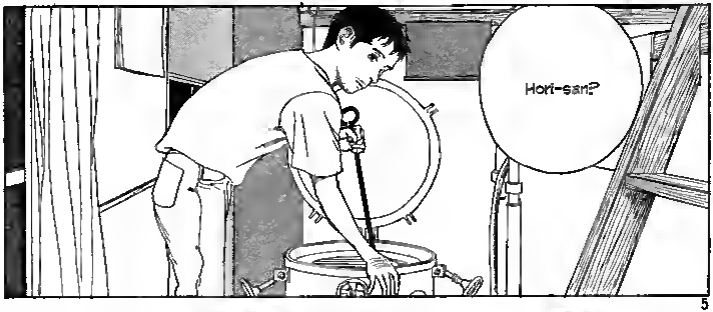
So why *not* try hiring a detective?
It's not like you can really do anything else... Aren't you kind of at an impasse right now?


Okay...
Would lunchtime tomorrow be all right?
burp
ポー
ポー
ポー
Anyway, I've already talked to him about it, so why don't you just try meeting him and talking it over?

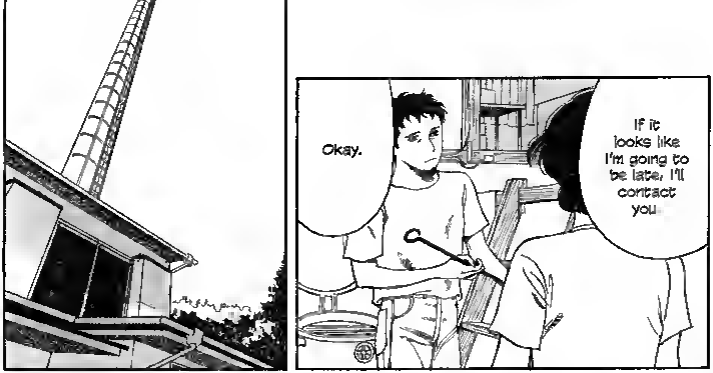

Then tomorrow at 12 at that café we went to. He said he'll have an envelope with his company's name on it so you'll know it's him.
That's fine.

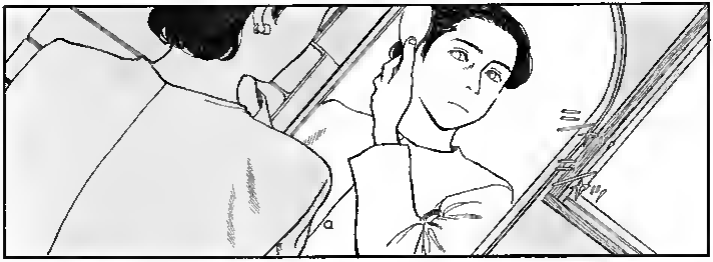
Yes, thanks for everything. Give my regards to your husband.
All right. I'll give it a shot, anyway. At noon, right?
Envelope... Pictures... Yamazaki...
Bring a few pictures of Satoru-san. Oh, and his name is Yamazaki.


.....
envelope・pictures・Yamazaki


Hori-san?

I'm going to be out after noon tomorrow. I should be back around 3.
Yes?





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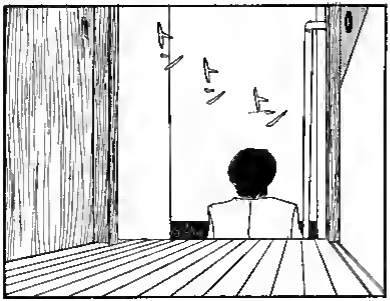

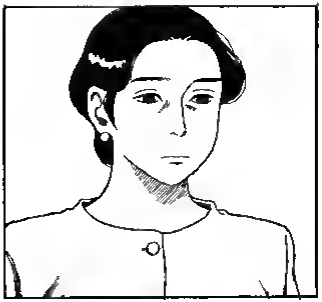

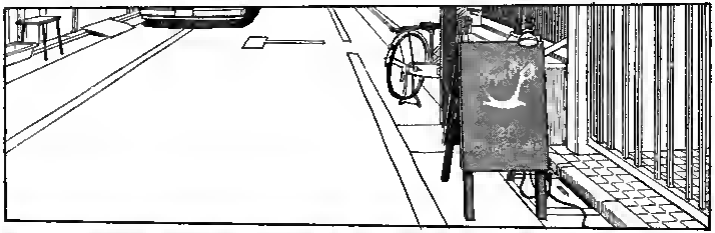

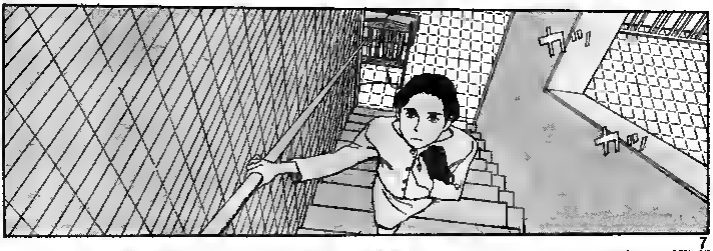

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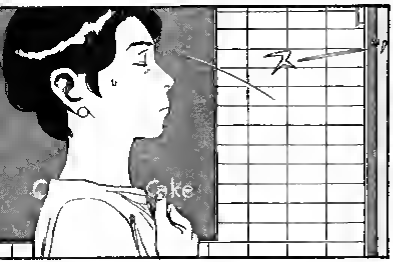
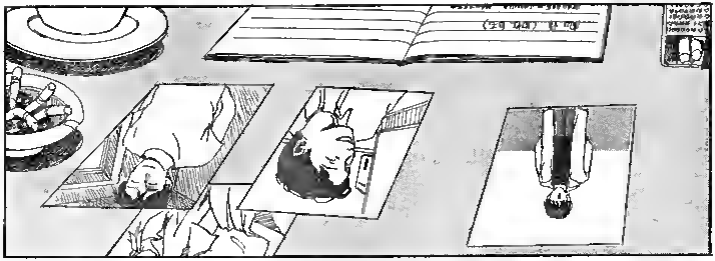


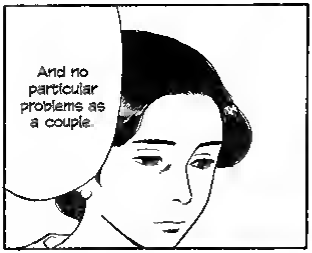
3

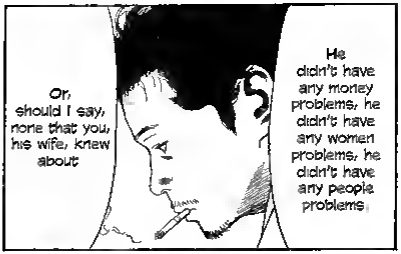
What?
No, I'm not.
It's okay
Oh, I'm really sorry!
I mistook you for someone else.
Hm——

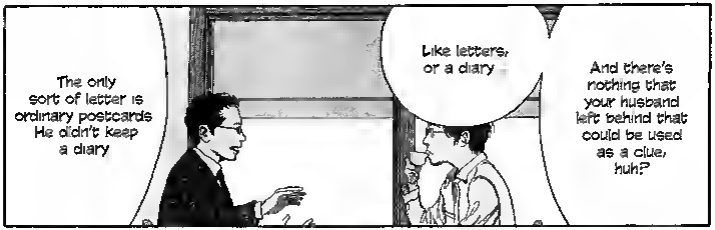
Um Yamazaki-san?
Hn?
Oh!
Uh
Oh! Sekiguchi-san?!
Yes

What?
Uh... Huh?
Oh, dang it!
Please, have a seat.
Okay
Oh, I'm sorry, it was just so comfortable...
I'm Yamazaki, but it's actually "Yamasaki".
Sorry, looks like I'm out of business cards right this moment.
I'll just write it out on here for now.
Okay
11
Oh, it doesn't matter Call me whichever you like
So what should I call you?
Like Hama-chan from "Tsunbake Nisshi"... but everybody calls me Yamazaki



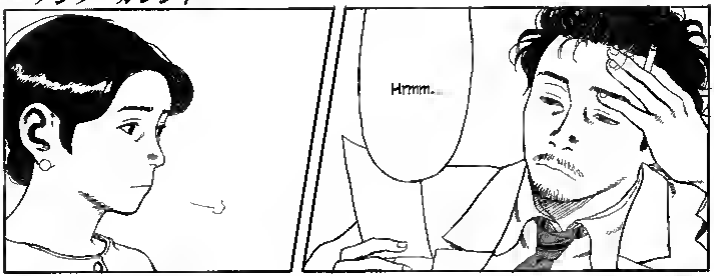

And no particular problems as a couple.

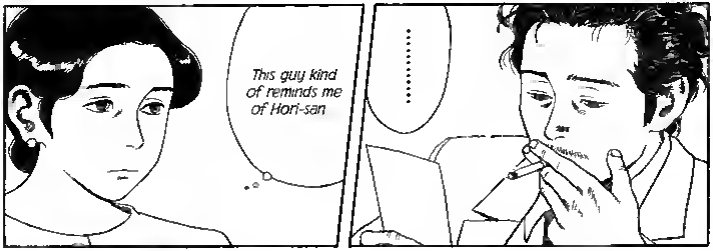

Or, should I say, none that you, his wife, knew about
He didn't have any money problems, he didn't have any women problems, he didn't have any people problems.

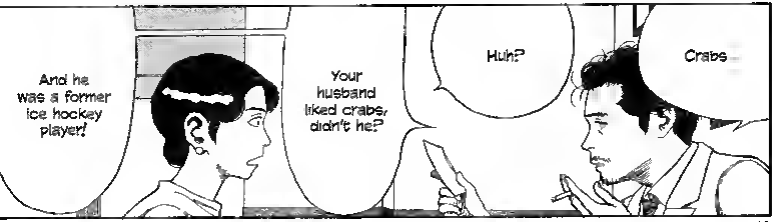

The only sort of letter is ordinary postcards. He didn't keep a diary.
Like letters, or a diary...
And there's nothing that your husband left behind that could be used as a clue, huh?

12

I don't do that sort of thing!
Nothing at all? You never peeked at your husband's cell phone call log or anything?

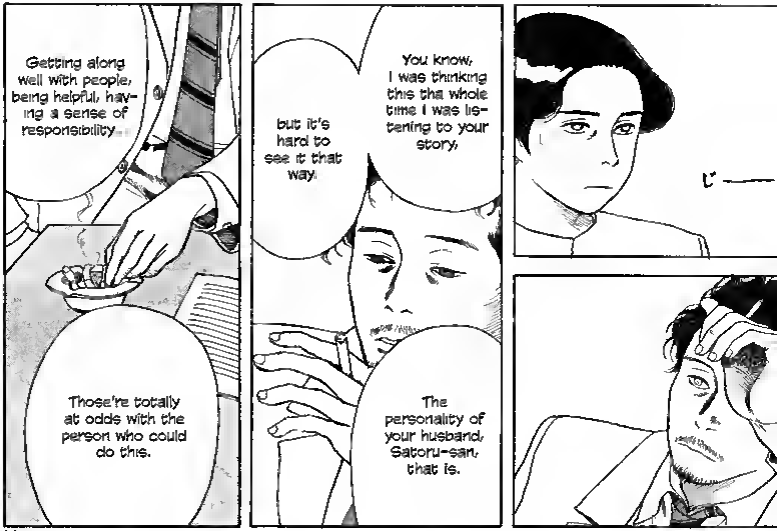

Hrmm...


This guy kind of reminds me of Hori-san
.....

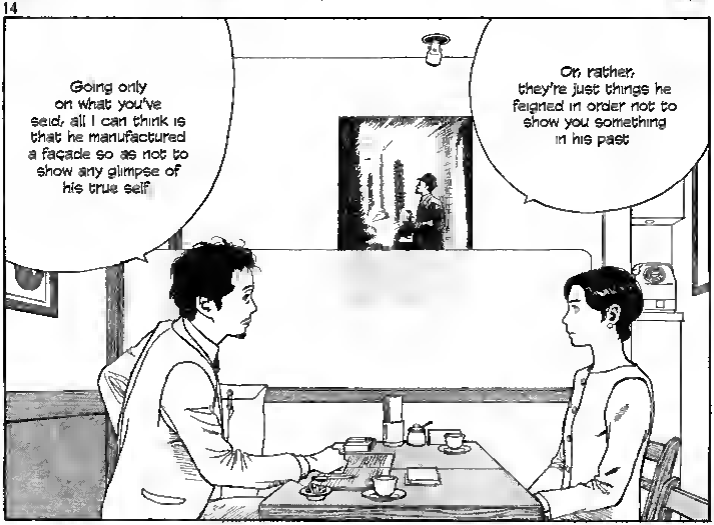

And he was a former ice hockey player?
Your husband liked crabs, didn't he?
Huh?
Crabs...

A hit and a miss, huh?
Hrm

but he wasn't an ice hockey player...
...I think he liked crabs as much as anybody.

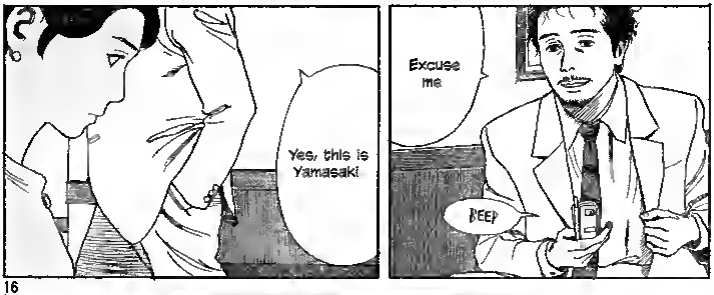

Getting along well with people, being helpful, having a sense of responsibility...
Those're totally at odds with the person who could do this.
but it's hard to see it that way.
You know, I was thinking this tha whole time I was listening to your story,
The personality of your husband, Satoru-san, that is.
じ——

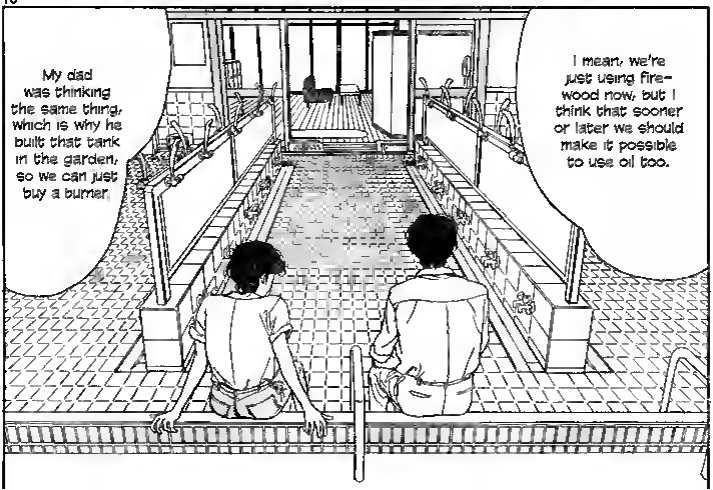
14


Going only on what you've said, all I can think is that he manufactured a façade so as not to show any glimpse of his true self.
Or, rather, they're just things he feigned in order not to show you something in his past.

So, as a person who was acquainted with him for four years and then was *married* to him for four years, do you understand him?
It's true I've never met him.
You've never even met Satoru-san. You're deciding this sort of thing without understanding him...
...You speak quite frankly
but, at the very least, I ought to understand more than *you!*
Hmm... Well then, let me ask you one thing
Well, I... Well, I can't say I understand everything.
15
Well, um... Spending time together. Understanding the way a person thinks...
What does it mean to understand someone?

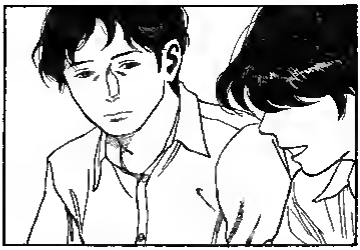
DUN-DUDUN-DI DUN
DI DUN-DUDUN-DI DUN
DUN-DUDUN-DI DUN
-DUDUN-DI DUN
And Um

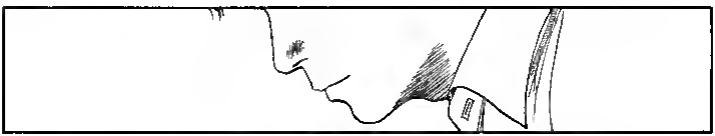

Yes, this is Yamasaki
Excuse me
BEEP


My dad was thinking the same thing, which is why he built that tank in the garden, so we can just buy a burner.
I meant, we're just using firewood now, but I think that sooner or later we should make it possible to use oil too.

Well, this is all off in the future, anyhow.
Oil is more expensive but less labor-intensive
We're managing just fine with only us and auntie, but if we have kids, won't it get pretty tiresome?

...What is it?





It's nothing.

Ma'am?
Ma'am?

You don't look too good.
Yes?
Are you all right?
Yes... I'm fine.

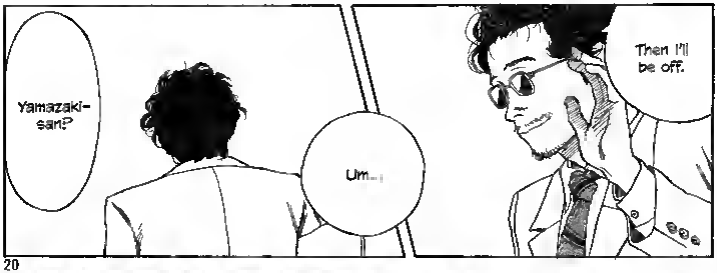
For the time being I'll go check out his trip's destination, Kyoto, it being his last known whereabouts. but that was 4 months ago, so the prospects don't seem too bright
Well, let's stop here today. You must be tired out.

18

I can't say that I'll be able to find anything out from that, but I'll give it a shot anyway
More importantly, I mentioned it before, but I'll be looking into the people, places, and areas that were related to your husband

Didn't you hear from Nishimura-san's wife? I'll only be asking you to cover my expenses, so I'll bill you later.
And... Um... What should I do about your pay...?
But, well, I can't even look Nishimura-san in the eyes. If he requests it, then I can't refuse. I've taken a lot of loans from him.
No, not at all. For a normal fee you'd be looking at tens of thousands of yen per day.
Um, I've never hired a detective before, but is that really normal?
I'll give you a progress report every two weeks. Can I contact you on your cellphone?
Yes...
For now, let's set the time limit at three months. At that point, we'll meet to discuss what to do next.
There'll be times where I'll have other jobs, so I can't say I'll be able to devote all my time to this one, but...

I said some things that might've rubbed you the wrong way, but please forgive me.
All right.
If you find out anything new, please contact me on my cellphone whenever!
No... It's okay

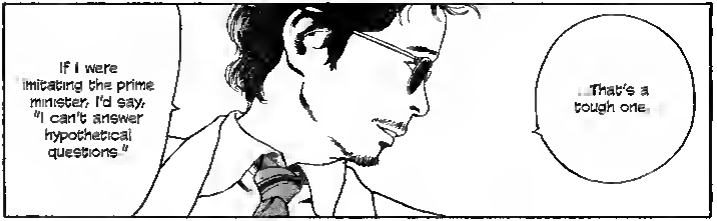

Yamazaki-san?
Um...
Then I'll be off.

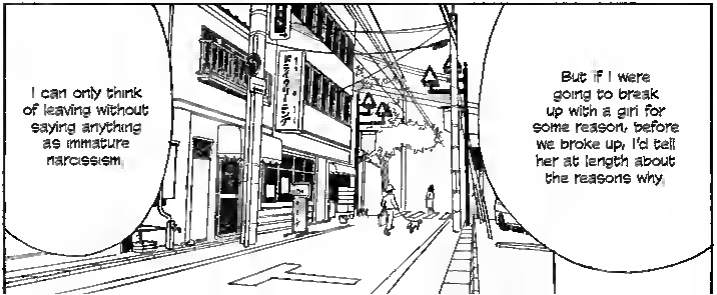
20

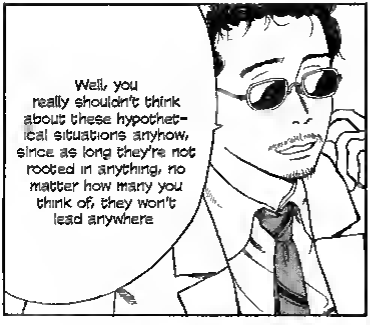
What is it?

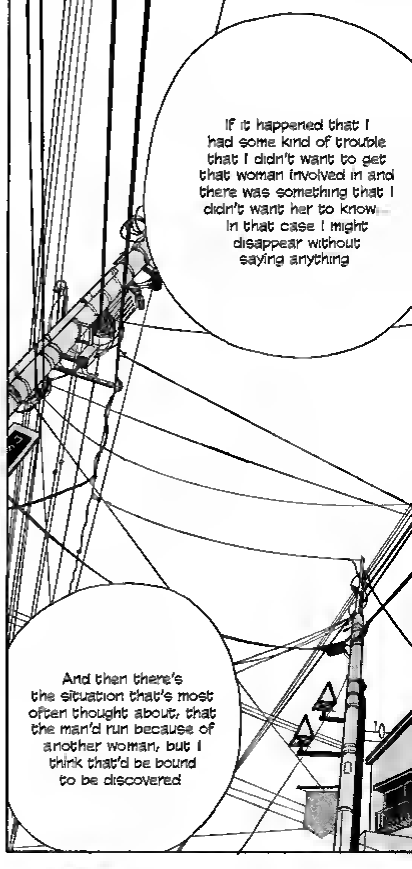
...If there were a woman you had lived together with for many years, if you left that person without saying anything, would it definitely be because of her?
Um... Sorry, but...

If you felt like that person didn't understand you at all, would you give up trying to explain and just leave?

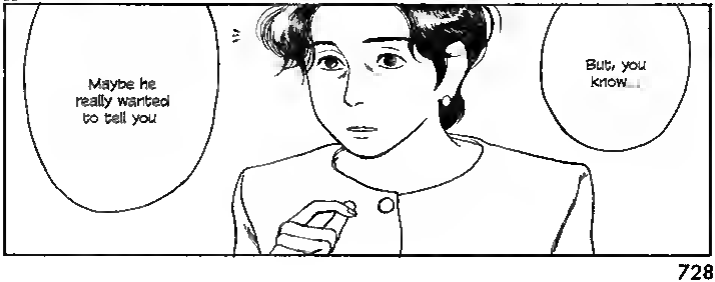

If I were imitating the prime minister, I'd say, "I can't answer hypothetical questions."
...That's a tough one.

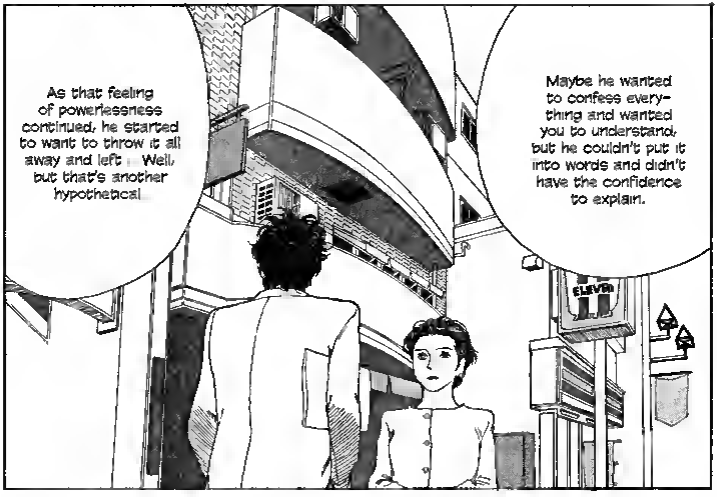

I can only think of leaving without saying anything as immature narcissism.
But if I were going to break up with a girl for some reason, before we broke up, I'd tell her at length about the reasons why.


Well, you really shouldn't think about these hypothetical situations anyhow, since as long they're not rooted in anything, no matter how many you think of, they won't lead anywhere

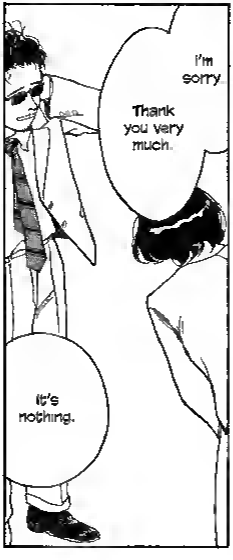

If it happened that I had some kind of trouble that I didn't want to get that woman involved in and there was something that I didn't want her to know... in that case I might disappear without saying anything
And then there's the situation that's most often thought about, that the man'd run because of another woman, but I think that'd be bound to be discovered

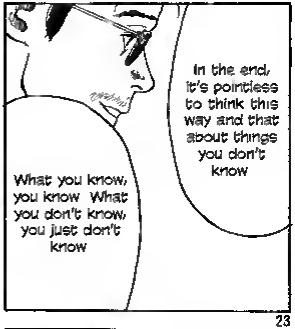
22


Maybe he really wanted to tell you
But, you know...


As that feeling of powerlessness continued, he started to want to throw it all away and left. Well, but that's another hypothetical.
Maybe he wanted to confess everything and wanted you to understand, but he couldn't put it into words and didn't have the confidence to explain.
ELEVEN

Ma'am?


I'm sorry.
Thank you very much.
It's nothing.


In the end, it's pointless to think this way and that about things you don't know
What you know, you know. What you don't know, you just don't know

Did he understand who *you* truly are?
What about you?

ゴオオオオオ
パチ
パチ

24

ガラガラ
ガラガラ
ターン
25

What does it mean to understand someone?

UNDERCURRENT c.4 end

Somehow, she had intended to stay the victim. The sudden confrontation of the fact that it may be her fault is a heavy blow

NCIS

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

UNDERCURRENT

C. 4

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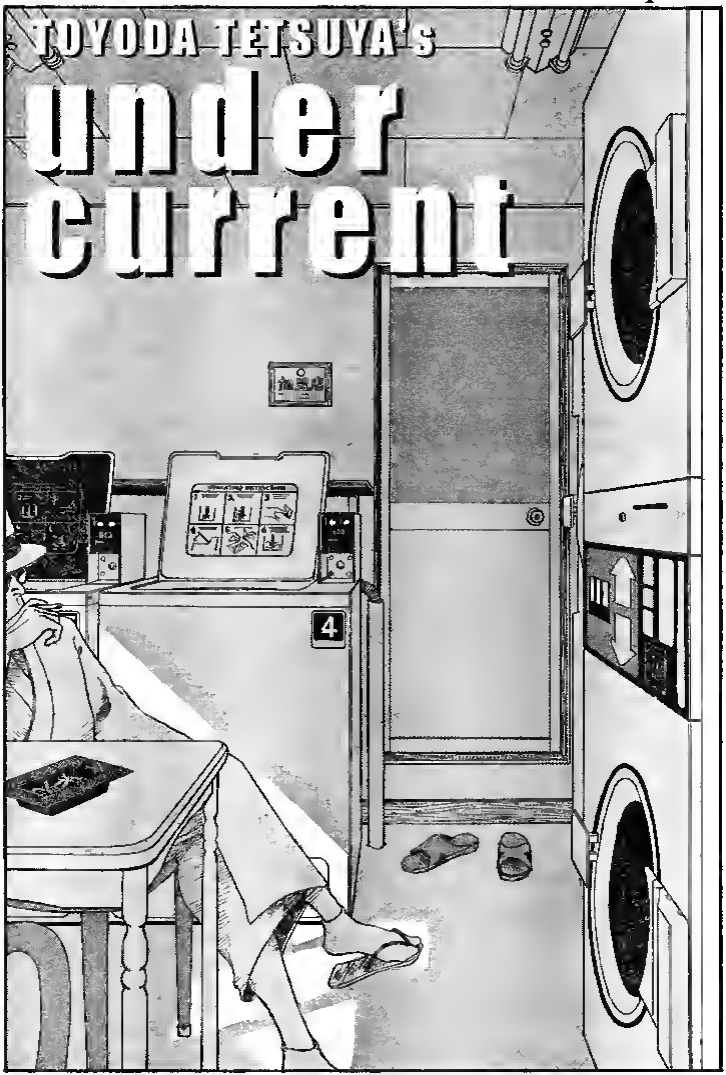
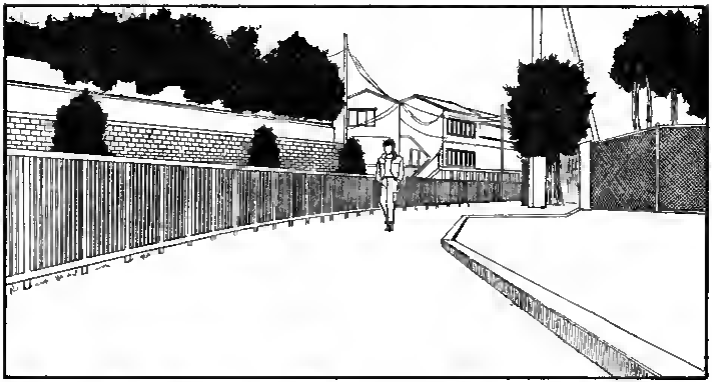
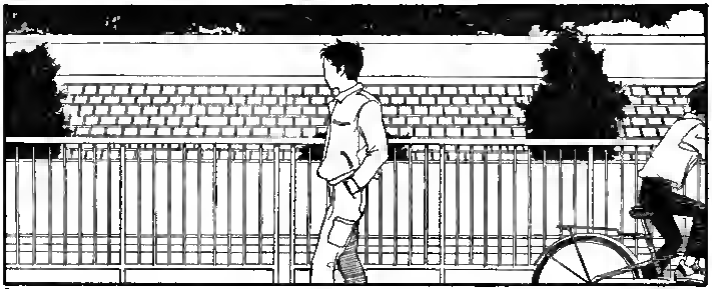
A few notes
Tsudzumi etc. Kanae and the girl are playing ayatori, the Japanese cat's cradle. The steps don't correspond exactly to the ones in the most common version in English speaking countries though people versed in string games may recognize the shapes they're making. Tsudzumi means 'the hand drum,' and you should really look Bunbuku Chagama up on Wikipedia.
Tsuribaka Nisshi A long running fishing manga about a business man named Densuke Hamasaki. The -saki in his name is spelled with the same kanji as the -saki in Yamasaki (and, indeed, the same kanji that is normally pronounced -zaki in Yamazaki, hence the confusion)



A shattered peace A memory no longer trusted.
A normalcy determined to return.

With her husband's disappearance, Hori appears as the savior of the struggling bath house
He is an enigmatic man with a wide work experience





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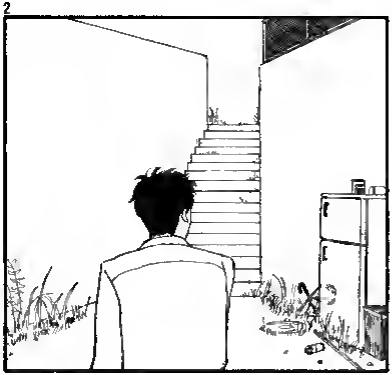

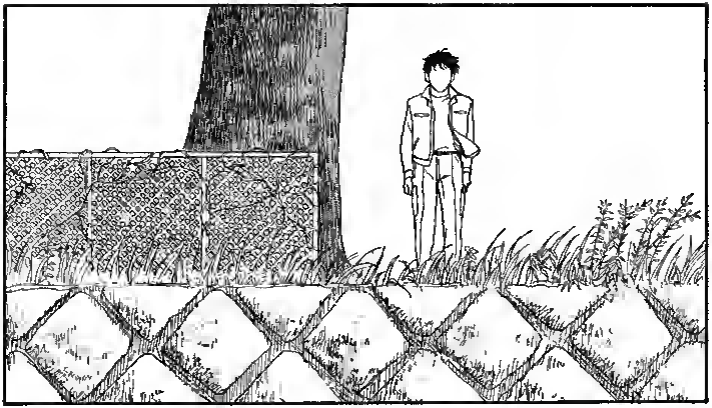

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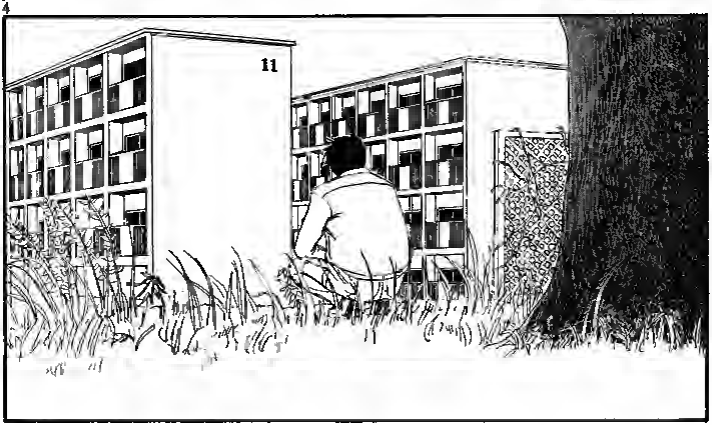


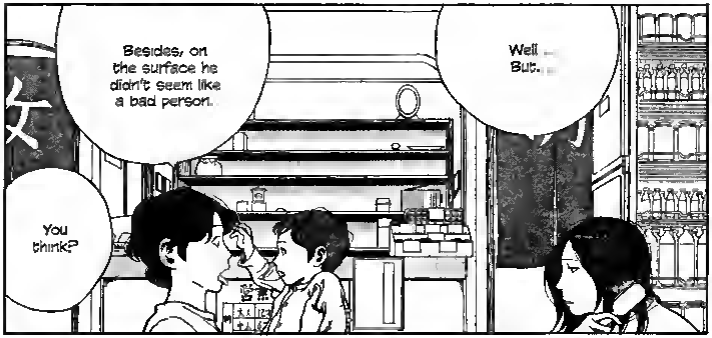
So what'd you think? About that guy

What'd I—
Ow ow ow ow ow!

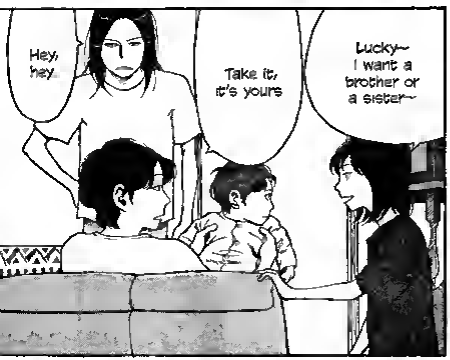
When I asked about it more, it turned out that maybe he wasn't employed at the detective agency and was subcontracted instead

You know, the guys who get called out when they don't have enough manpower, or there's an incident that the main office can't handle
Subcon-tracted?

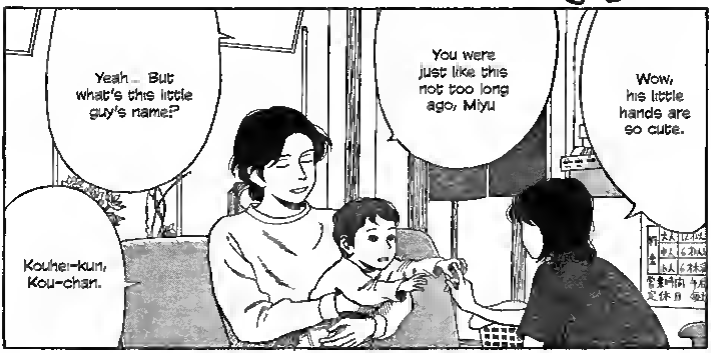
The risky ones where even solving them doesn't do much good for the company... Well, I don't know
That's not it, is it? It's not like it's things the agency *can't* handle, it's the cases that it doesn't *want* to handle that they're sent out on, isn't it?
Huh? Then he's got to be pretty good, right?
...Well, it certainly felt pretty fishy—
That aside, isn't he sketchy? Doesn't he seem pretty fishy?
6
Just like you said, for the time being there's nothing else I can do, and as it is, there hasn't been any progress otherwise
Nah, it's all right
Sorry, I introduced you to someone pretty weird

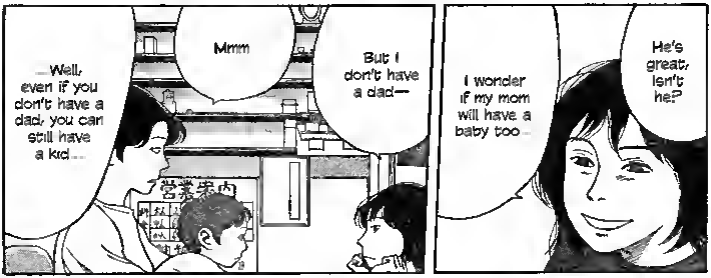

Besides, on the surface he didn't seem like a bad person.
You think?
Well... But...

Hello—
Oh! A baby!
Okay, I got it.
Well, if he demands some ridiculous fees or something later on, let me know.

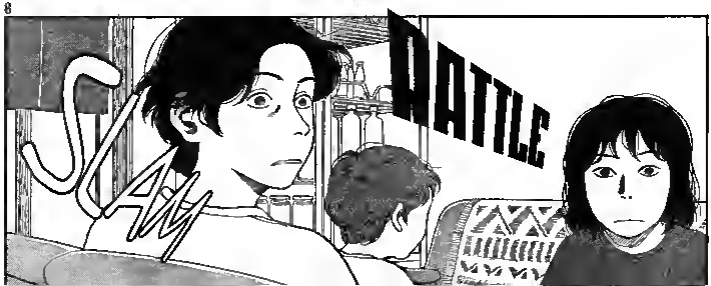

Hey, hey.
Take it, it's yours
Lucky~ I want a brother or a sister~

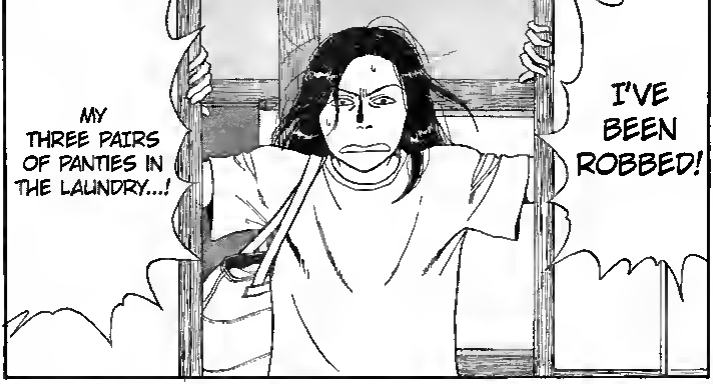
What's this? Is this your kid?
Nah

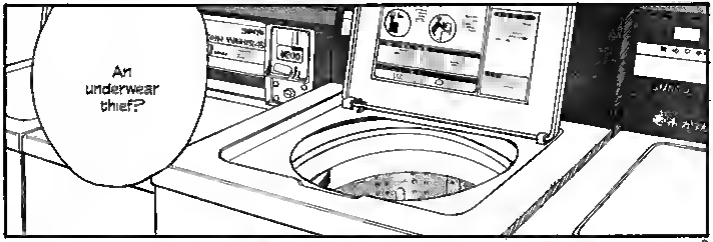

Yeah... But what's this little guy's name?
You were just like this not too long ago, Miyu
Wow, his little hands are so cute.
Kouhei-kun, Kou-chan.


...Well, even if you don't have a dad, you can still have a kid...
Mmm
But I don't have a dad—
I wonder if my mom will have a baby too...
He's great, isn't he?

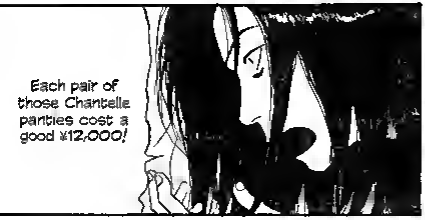
Hm?
What's with all these tremors?
After you take a bath... You can't hold a baby with dirty hands.
Hey, can I hold him?


BATTLE
STAY


I'VE BEEN ROBBED!
MY THREE PAIRS OF PANTIES IN THE LAUNDRY...!


An underwear thief?

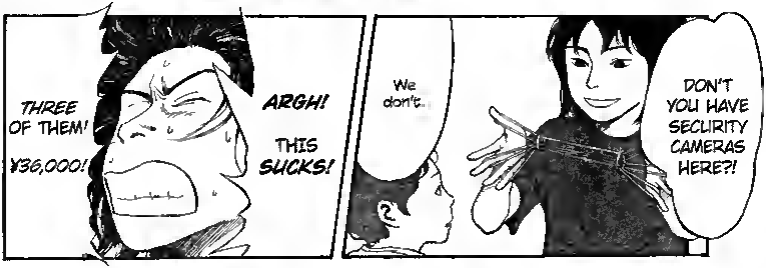
9


Each pair of those Chantelle panties cost a good ¥12,000!

You sure? Did you look everywhere?
I'm sure! I put the most expensive ones in a bag, but everything in it's gone!

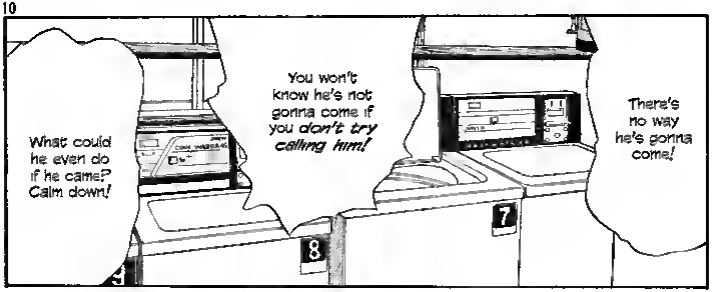
ガンガンガン
You're not allowed to
I *knew* I should've washed them by hand in the bath-house!

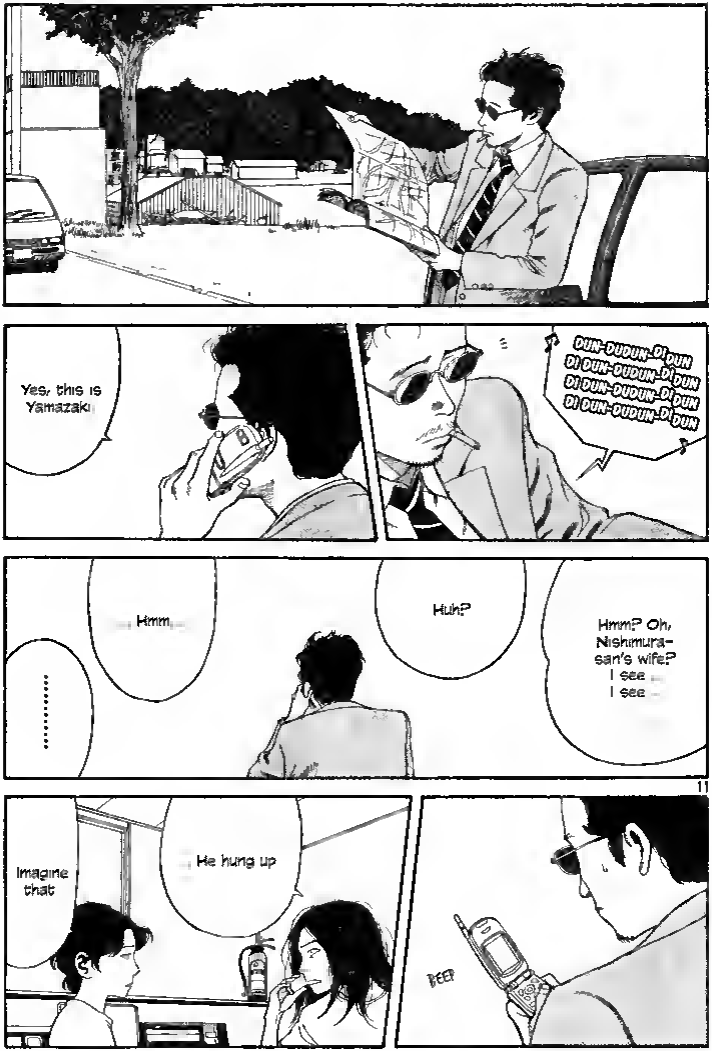
Hold on, Kanno, calm down.
I KNOW, LET'S CALL THE POLICE! WE'LL GET THEM TO CORDON OFF THE AREA...!


THREE OF THEM! ¥36,000!
ARGH! THIS SUCKS!
We don't.
DON'T YOU HAVE SECURITY CAMERAS HERE?!

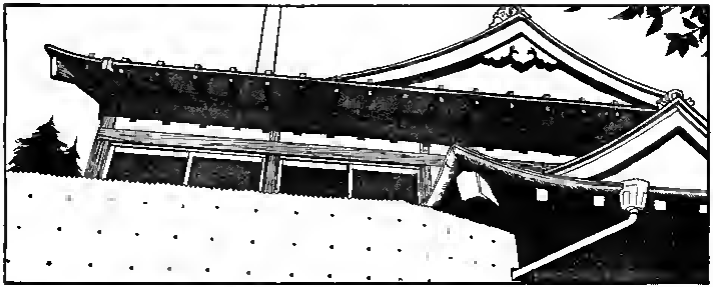
It's a case! Call him right away!
Huh? What for?
How about this? How about we contact that detective?!

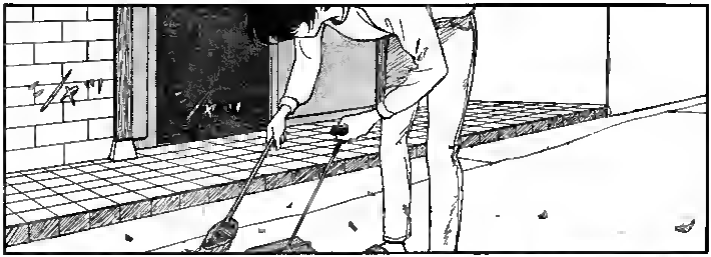
10

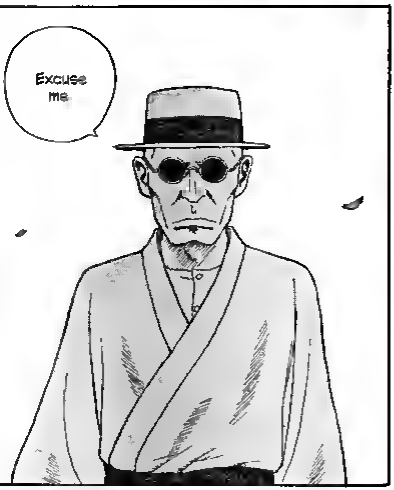

What could he even do if he came? Calm down!
You won't know he's not gonna come if you don't try calling him!
There's no way he's gonna come!

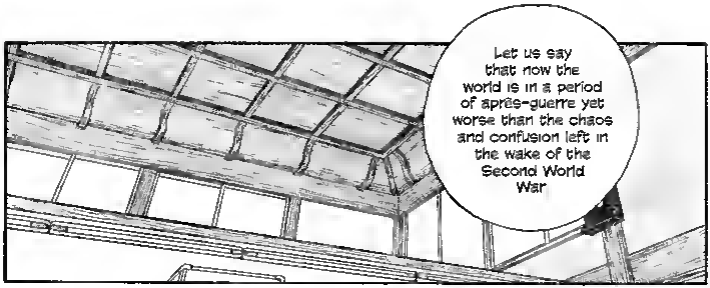

Yes, this is Yamazaki
DUN-DUDUN-DI DUN DI DUN-DUDUN-DI DUN DI DUN-DUDUN-DI DUN DI DUN-DUDUN-DI DUN
Hmm...
Huh?
Hmm? Oh, Nishimura-san's wife? I see... I see...
.....
11
Imagine that
He hung up
BEEP

There hasn't been one here for some time... Today's the first time we've gotten hit in a good while.
Yep.
Underwear thief?
Ah...
By the end of it, she was trying to get Kura to sniff her panties, saying that it'd make him learn the scent and track them down.
My friend had her ridiculously pricy underwear taken and went half-insane.
12
Sorry, I know this isn't in your job description.
I see. I'll keep my eyes peeled.
Well, there are places that have security cameras, but we'd like as much as possible not to have them here.

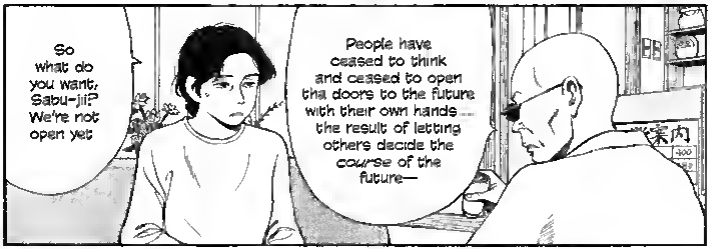





Excuse me.

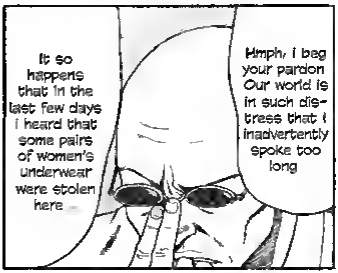

Let us say that now the world is in a period of après-guerre yet worse than the chaos and confusion left in the wake of the Second World War

While politics and the economy continue to stagnate, the hearts of men falter, morals corrode, and nihilism and decadence stalk the land


So what do you want, Sabu-jii? We're not open yet
People have ceased to think and ceased to open the doors to the future with their own hands ... the result of letting others decide the course of the future—
案内

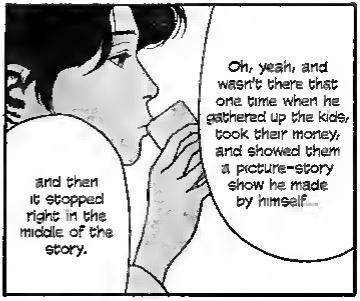
14

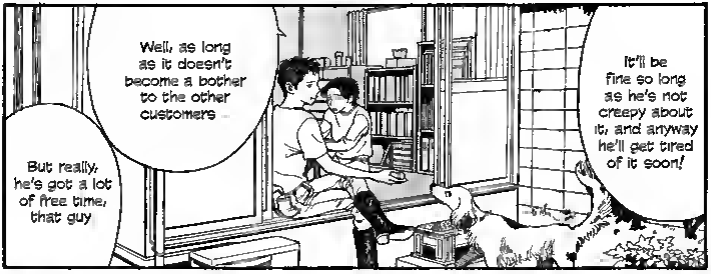
What?
By the way, were you aware that I normally patrol this area in order to prevent such disasters?
案内


It so happens that in the last few days I heard that some pairs of women's underwear were stolen here ...
Hmph, I beg your pardon Our world is in such distress that I inadvertently spoke too long

Hmm? Sabu-ji came by around noon?
What about?
Who's that? Sabu-ji, I mean
Tajima Saburou, an eccentric old man who's famous around here.
He said he was going to keep an eye on the laundry to "prevent any crimes" or something, so we "don't need to worry"
He was a Yakuza, originally
He got arrested for gambling, didn't he?
Oh? Wasn't he an artisan?
No, no, a street vendor
He's always roaming around doing something... trying to catch the ducks in the stream, conning people at the pachinko parlor... He's always up to no good.
15
In my naiveté I always wondered what on Earth he did, though
Sabu-ji has been like this ever since I was a kid. Whenever you thought you hadn't seen him for a while, he'd suddenly appear...

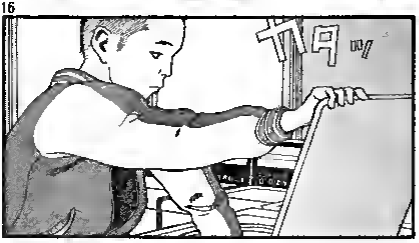
He's always been like that, suddenly starting something up and abandoning it just as fast
So, what? He said he's going to watch over the laundry?


Oh, yeah, and wasn't there that one time when he gathered up the kids, took their money, and showed them a picture-story show he made by himself...
and then it stopped right in the middle of the story.

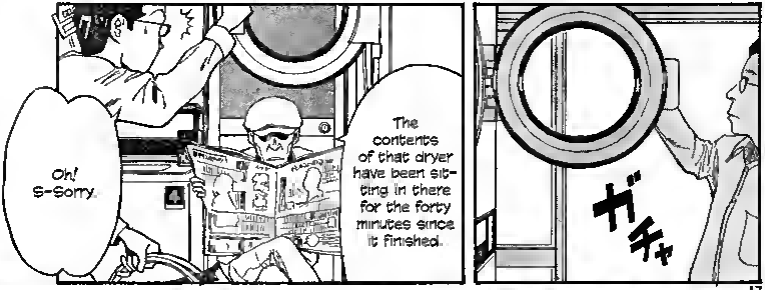

Well, as long as it doesn't become a bother to the other customers...
But really, he's got a lot of free time, that guy
It'll be fine so long as he's not creepy about it, and anyway he'll get tired of it soon!

LAUNDROMAT

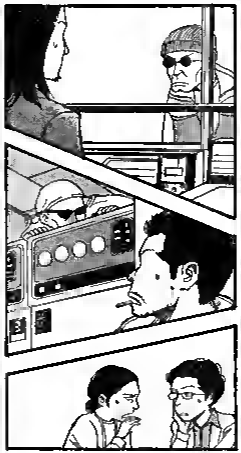
16



Um...
What's up..?
ジィ

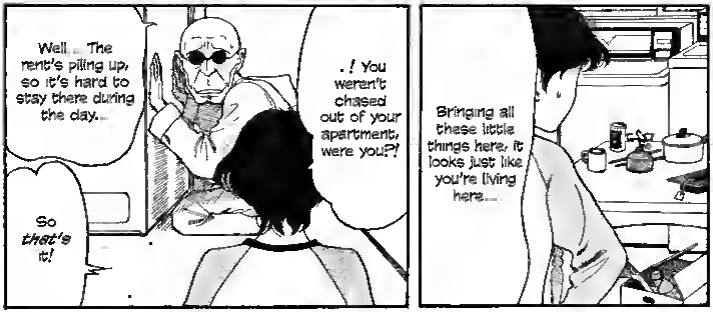

Oh! S-Sorry.
The contents of that dryer have been sitting in there for the forty minutes since it finished.
ガチャ

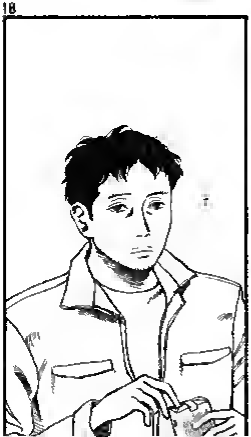
SABU-JII!

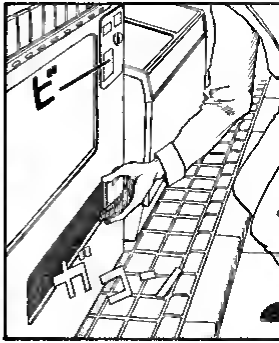


ゴウンゴウンゴウン
……
……
ゴウンガウン
ガウン!

YOU'VE BEEN STARING AT THE CUSTOMERS WITH THOSE WEIRD GIMLET EYES OF YOURS, HAVEN'T YOU! I KNEW IT!
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?! I'VE BEEN GETTING A LOT OF COMPLAINTS FROM THE CUSTOMERS!
Um, err, I'm just patrolling...
BESIDES, THIS ISN'T PATROLLING, THIS IS STANDING GUARD! I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO STAND GUARD HERE THE WHOLE TIME!


Well... The rent's piling up, so it's hard to stay there during the day...
. ! You weren't chased out of your apartment, were you!?
So that's it!
Bringing all these little things here, it looks just like you're living here...

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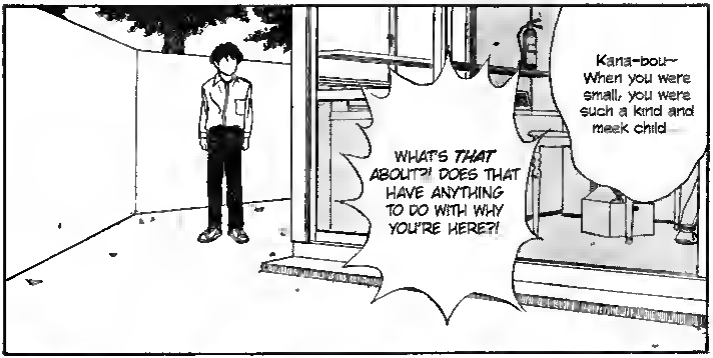
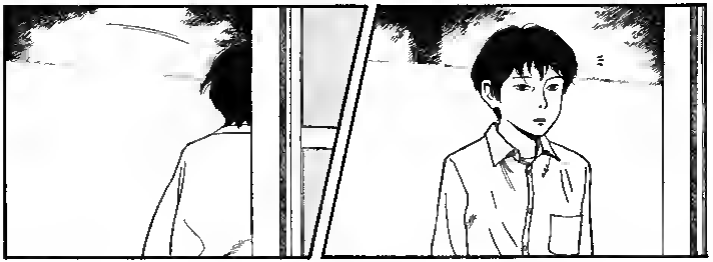
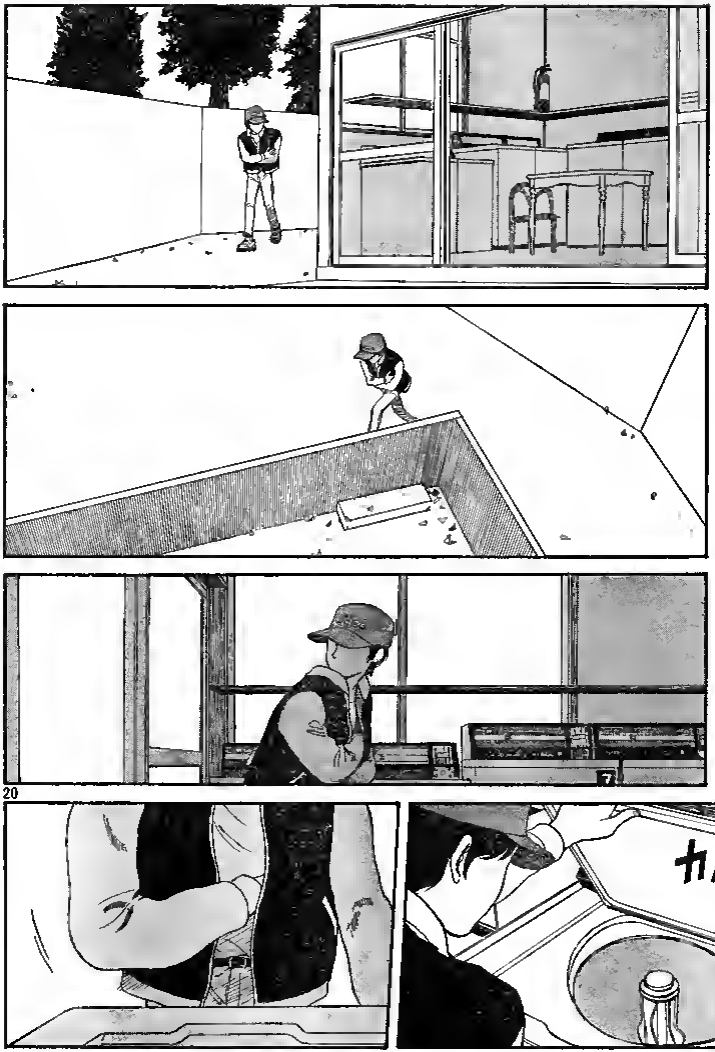

Kana-bou~
When you were small, you were such a kind and meek child...
WHAT'S *THAT* ABOUT?! DOES THAT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH WHY YOU'RE HERE?!



WHAT?
WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO SAY?!
I'LL KICK YOU! DON'T TEST ME!
Nooo! Stop!
It's because of this that your hus...b...
mumble mutter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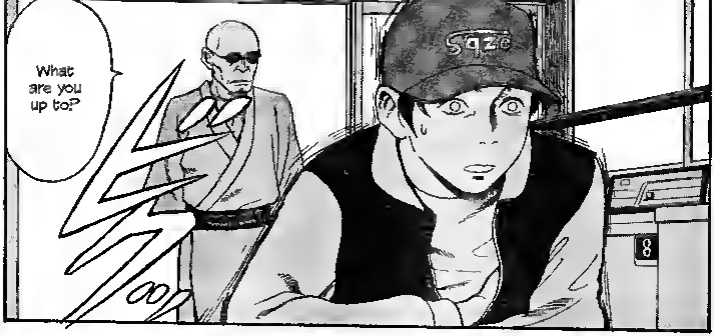

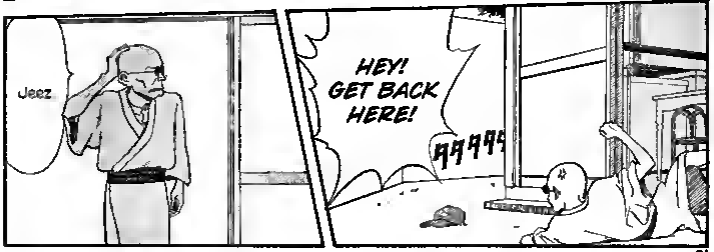

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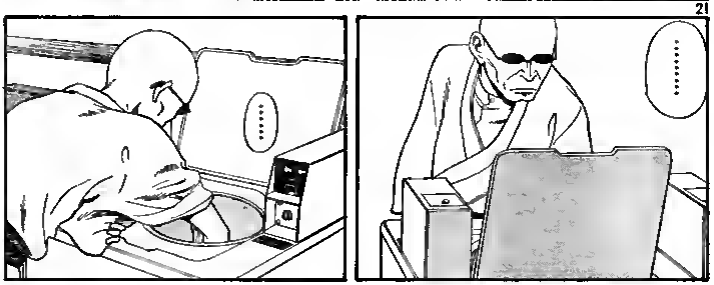
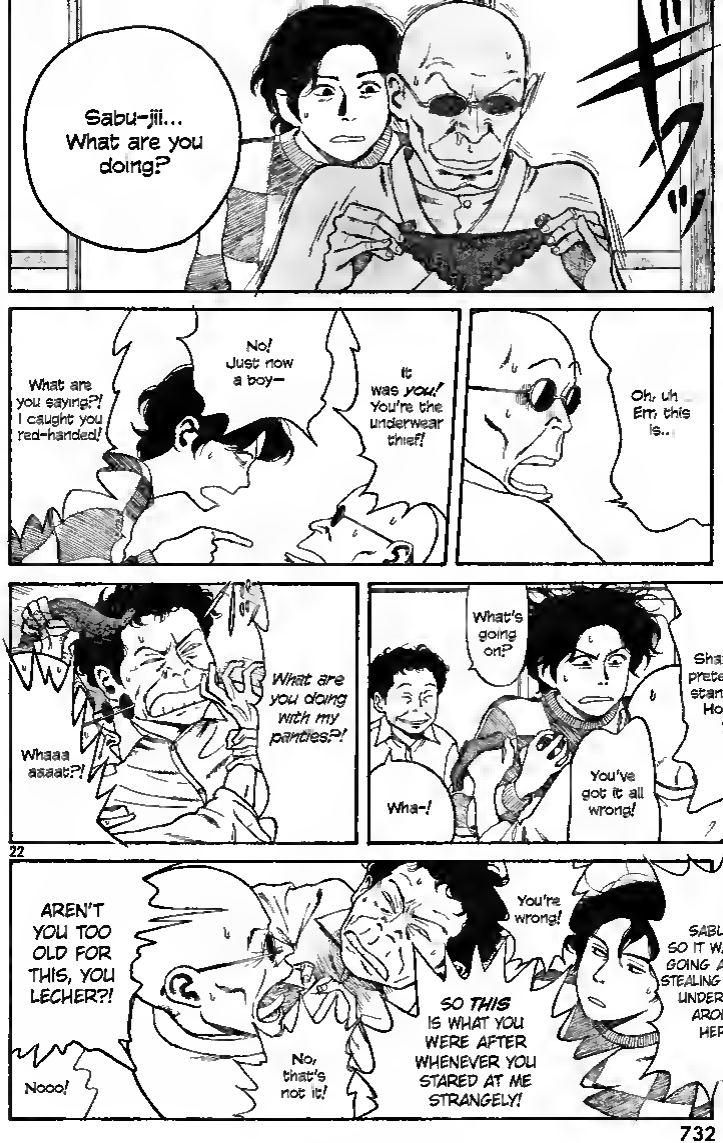


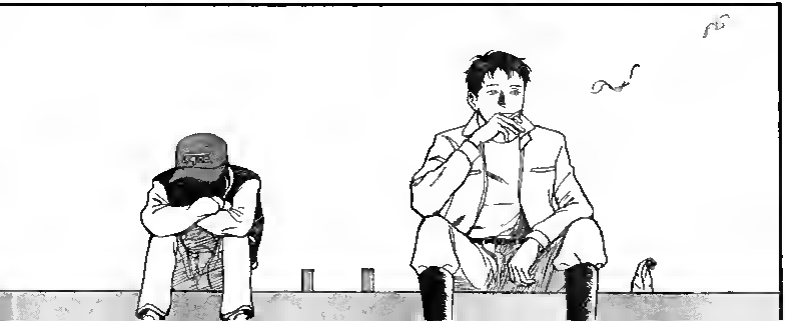

Sabu-jii... What are you doing?
No! Just now a boy—
What are you saying?! I caught you red-handed!
It was *you!* You're the underwear thief!
Oh, uh Em, this is...
What are you doing with my panties?!
Whaaa aaaat?!
What's going on?
Wha-!
You've got it all wrong!
Shamelessly pretending to stand guard! How dare you!
AREN'T YOU TOO OLD FOR THIS, YOU LECHER?!
Nooo!
No, that's not it!
SO *THIS* IS WHAT YOU WERE AFTER WHENEVER YOU STARED AT ME STRANGELY!
You're wrong!
SABU-JII, SO IT WAS YOU GOING AROUND STEALING ALL THE UNDERWEAR AROUND HERE!

23
You went to return the underwear, didn't you?
I was watching you from up on the roof

I'll return them for you later.
Hand those over and go home
I won't tell anyone, so...
C'mon.

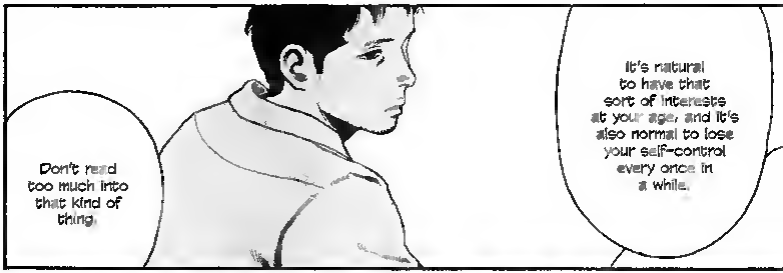
I'm no enemy of yours, so don't worry
I'll keep my promise.
Stop it.

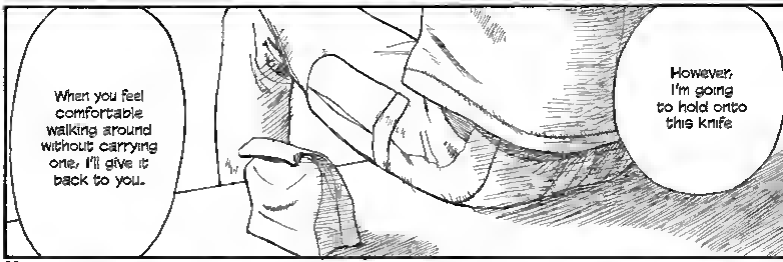
25



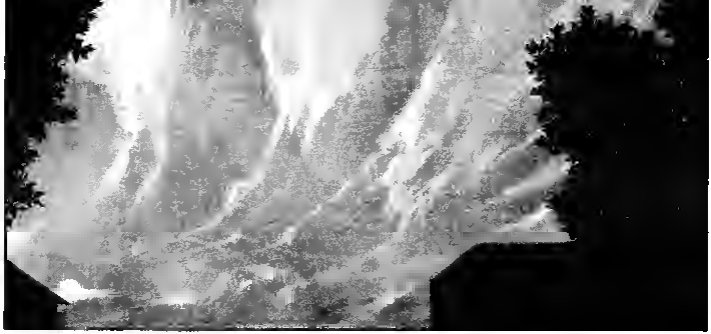
...there was nothing I could do to control myself...
I knew it was something I wasn't supposed to do, but...
...I'm a pervert... ...I'm no good...

...I'm no good...


Don't read too much into that kind of thing.
It's natural to have that sort of interests at your age, and it's also normal to lose your self-control every once in a while.


When you feel comfortable walking around without carrying one, I'll give it back to you.
However, I'm going to hold onto this knife

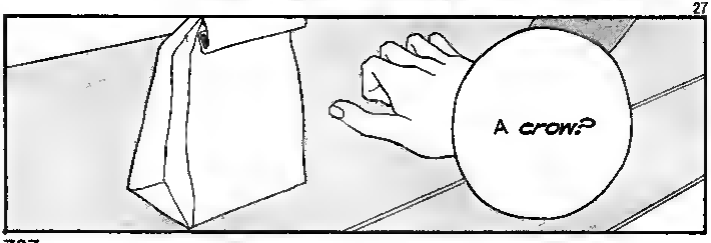
...All things considered, it's not easy being a man.



You found them! Where?
What!

Anyway, I got them back, so please return them to the owner and find some way to explain it...
Well, I can't really tell you the details, but...
So Sabu-J! didn't do it after all...

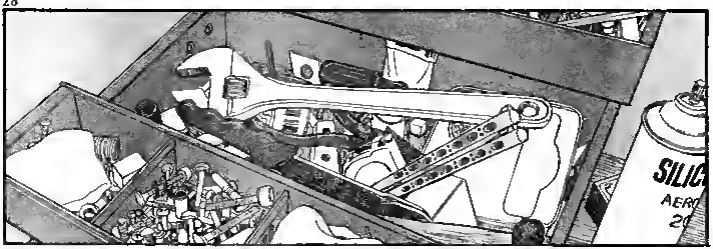
27


A crow?

That's right. I was pretty surprised.
You found them in a crow's nest? You're telling me a crow had them?!
Are you saying that the crow opened the lid and took them?!

What's it matter? They're back without a scratch.
No matter how smart they are, they can't open the lid of a washing machine!
Crows are smart, you know.
Ugh! I just don't get it at all!

Isn't the embroidery on them shiny? Crows like to gather shiny things.
I mean, why would a crow take my underwear?
Do my panties look shiny to you?!



NCIS

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

UNDERCURRENT

C. 5

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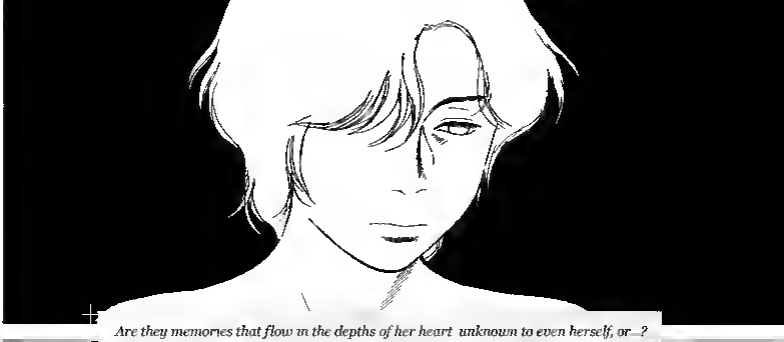
A few notes
Chantelle: A high-end French lingerie brand. Their items mostly aren't this pricy. no
Sabu's picture-story show: He made a *kamishibai* story, which is a series of illustrated boards with the text of the story printed on the backs. They're mostly used for telling stories to groups of children
The knife: In case you haven't seen one before, butterfly knives conceal the blade in between the rotating handles

What she thought was sincere was just a façade.
What she thought was everyday was just a lie

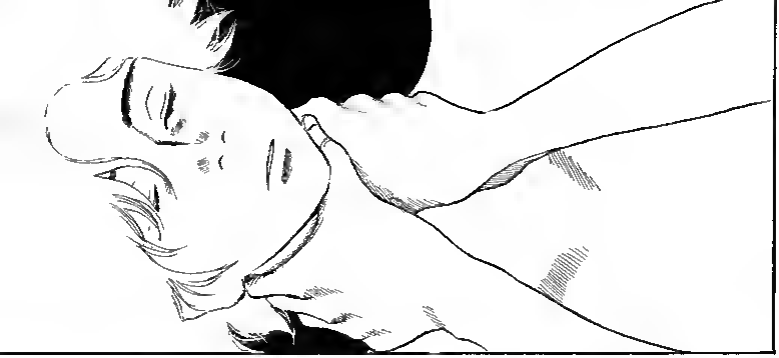


Are they memories that flow in the depths of her heart unknown to even herself, or...?

"Why are you crying?"

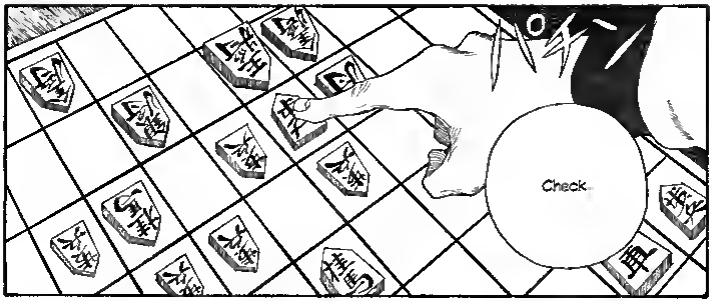
"I don't know"

2

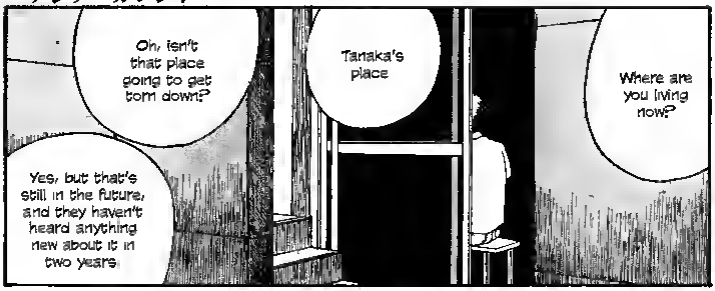


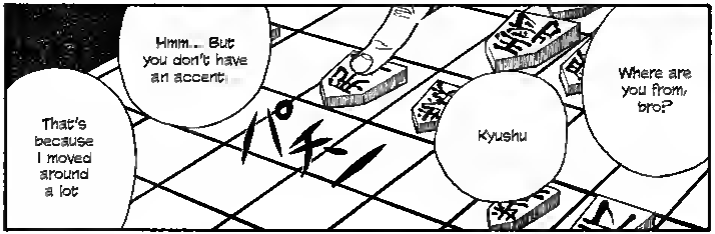
"Is something sad?"

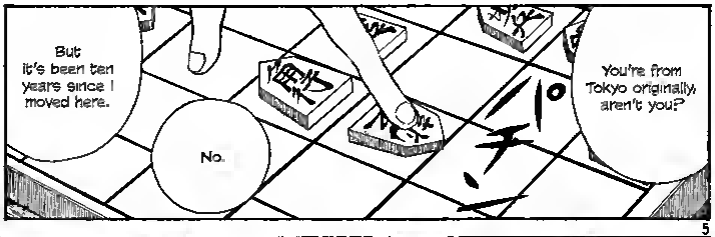
"I don't know."



4 nifu: can't put two unpromoted pawns in the same column

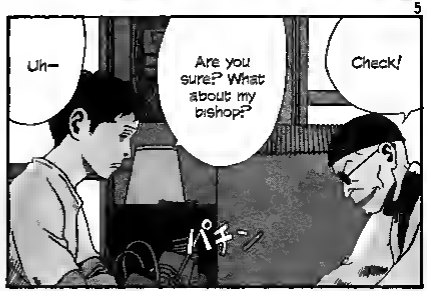

Oh, isn't that place going to get torn down?
Tanaka's place
Where are you living now?
Yes, but that's still in the future, and they haven't heard anything new about it in two years.


Hmm... But you don't have an accent.
Where are you from, bro?
That's because I moved around a lot
Kyushu

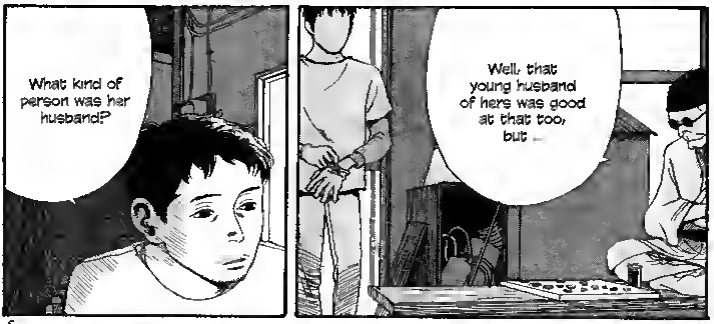

But it's been ten years since I moved here.
You're from Tokyo originally, aren't you?
No.

5

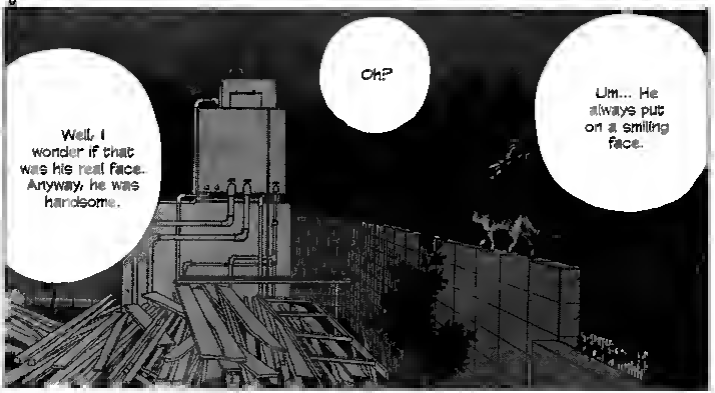
But it must be tough on you too, right?

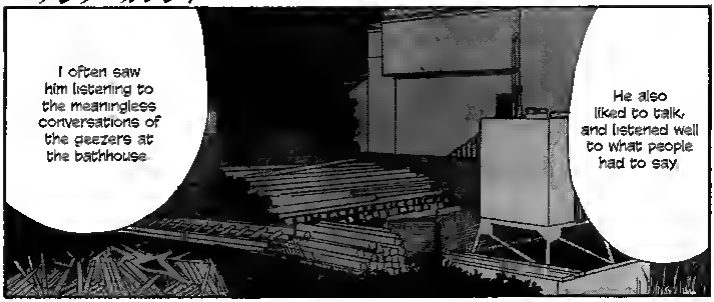

Uh—
Are you sure? What about my bishop?
Check!
パチン

Nah~ You don't have to hide it. I know her temperament well
It's not like that at all.
Being worked to the bone by that headstrong woman.


What kind of person was her husband?
Well, that young husband of hers was good at that too, but ...

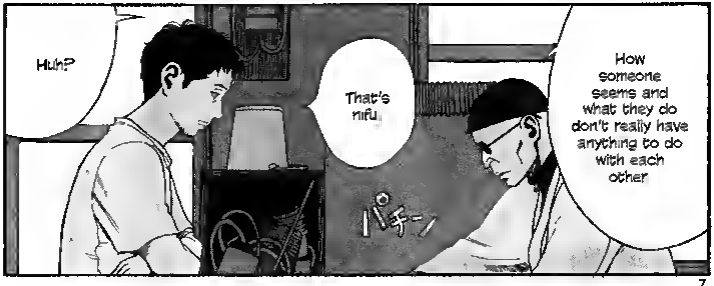
6


Well, I wonder if that was his real face. Anyway, he was handsome.
Oh?
Um... He always put on a smiling face.

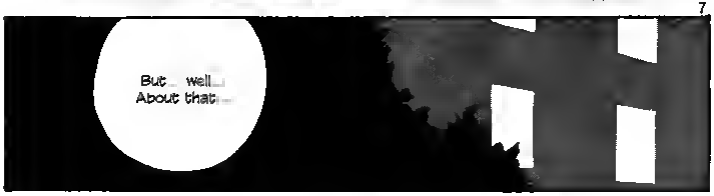

I often saw him listening to the meaningless conversations of the geezers at the bathhouse
He also liked to talk, and listened well to what people had to say

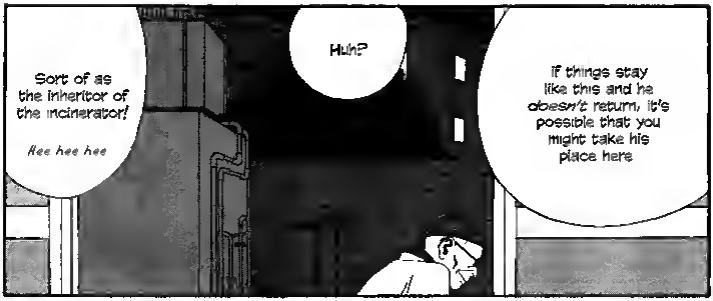
But...
Well now.

Then he didn't seem like someone who would suddenly disappear, huh?


Huh?
That's niru.
How someone seems and what they do don't really have anything to do with each other
パチーン

7

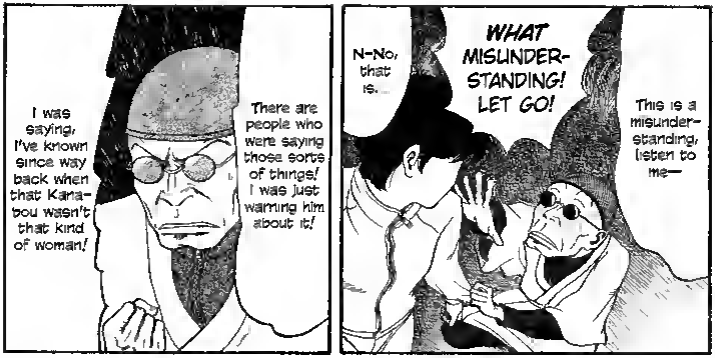

But... well... About that...

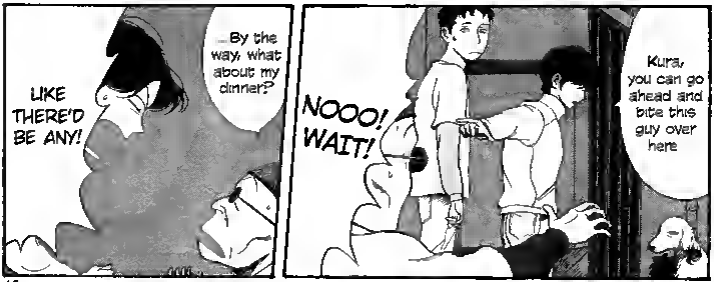

Sort of as the inheritor of the incinerator!
Hee hee hee
Huh?
If things stay like this and he *doesn't* return, it's possible that you might take his place here

Plus, with her still being so young, it would be a ***shame*** for her to get used to *sleeping* alone...
Ah, no, that's...
Kanae-bou is young, and the future is merciless There's almost no hope for a woman to make it alone in this business

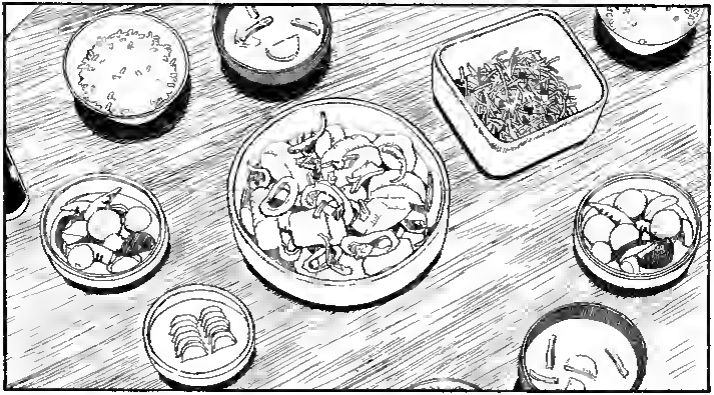
It wouldn't be strange for that to happen with healthy, single men and women working together at a bath house!
...Hey, I won't tell anyone
Let's stop beating around the bush! You two've already *gone all the way*, haven't you? Right?

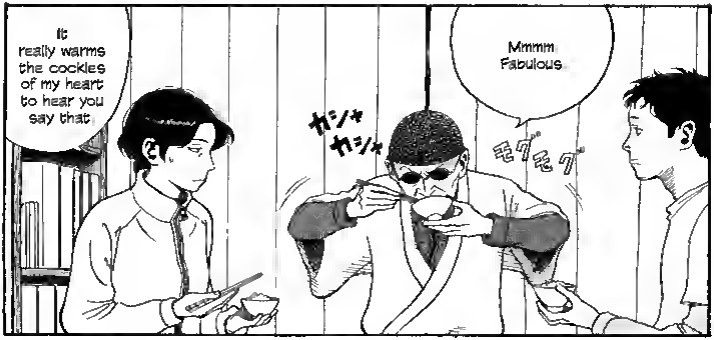
AHHHH!
ガラ…
Hori-san, dinner.
KURA!
KURA!
No! No! This is a mistake, ma'am!
Oh? Who could this be? I didn't invite anyone over, and yet there's this suspicious person here!
BESIDES, WHAT I DO HAS GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU! MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
WHERE'S THE MISTAKE?! SNEAKING INTO SOMEONE'S HOUSE AND BABBLING ABOUT WHATEVER POPS INTO YOUR HEAD— YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!
Eeeeek!


I was saying, I've known since way back when that Kanabou wasn't that kind of woman!
There are people who were saying those sorts of things! I was just warning him about it!
N-No, that is...
WHAT MISUNDERSTANDING! LET GO!
This is a misunderstanding, listen to me—


LIKE THERE'D BE ANY!
...By the way, what about my dinner?
NOOO! WAIT!
Kura, you can go ahead and bite this guy over here

10

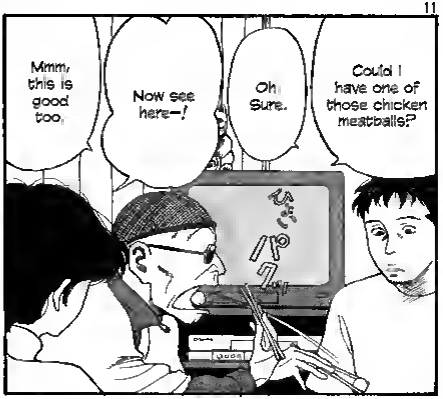



It really warms the cockles of my heart to hear you say that.
カシャ カシャ
Mmmm Fabulous.
モグモグ

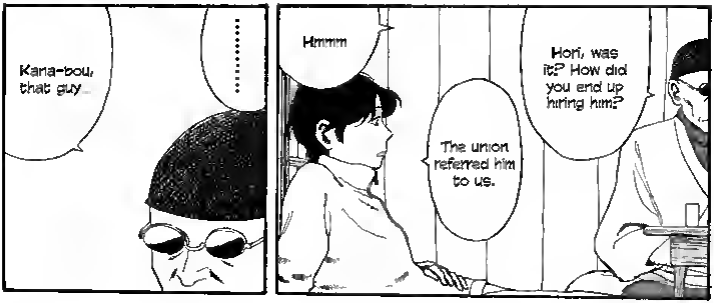
Squid is best as sashimi, but it's already past season, so stewing it was the right choice—
Can't you be quiet!
It was
This was cooked in its guts, wasn't it?
Thank you.
This stewed squid and daikon is great.

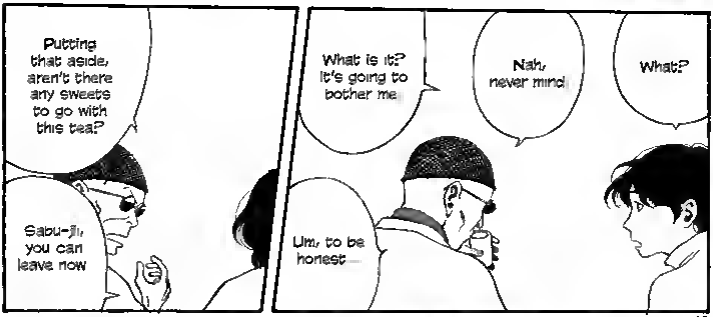
11

Now, the really special part of this is these vegetables
Yum yum
モグモグ


Mmm, this is good too.
Now see here—!
Oh. Sure.
Could I have one of those chicken meatballs?
ピッ
パク

The flavor of mine can't hold a candle to his, though
Those vegetables were one of my father's favorite dishes. He made it for us all the time.
Oh, Kouzou-san, huh?
They're soft, simmered just enough to have excellent mouth-feel, while the seasoning is exquisitely piquant, and neither too heavy nor too light—
Jeez, are you eating or talking?!
Oh, Hori-san.
I'll take it, I'll take it.
Ooo, please.
Um, would you like some of this?
Thank you for dinner.
What for?
Nothing in particular
I'm going to be out again tomorrow afternoon
Understood.

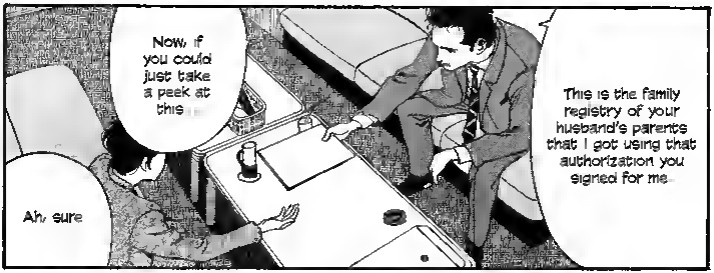

Kana-bou, that guy...
.....
Hmmm
Hori, was it? How did you end up hiring him?
The union referred him to us.

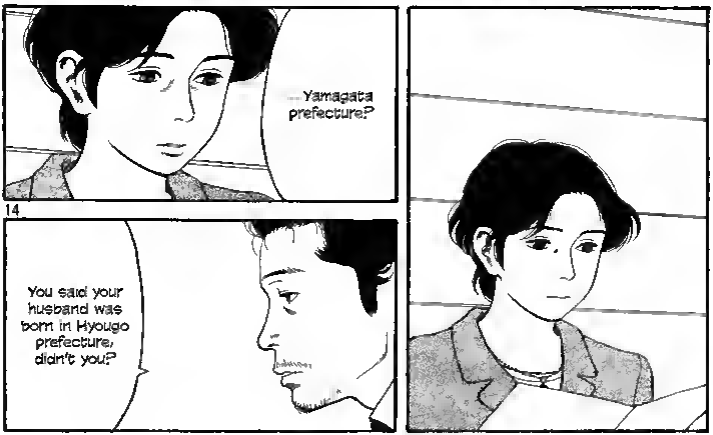

Putting that aside, aren't there any sweets to go with this tea?
Sabu-ji, you can leave now
What is it? It's going to bother me
Nah, never mind
What?
Um, to be honest...

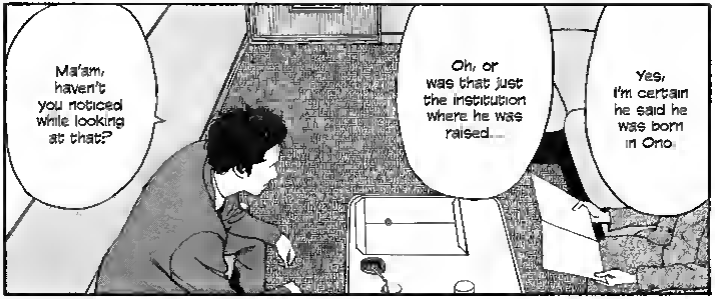
13

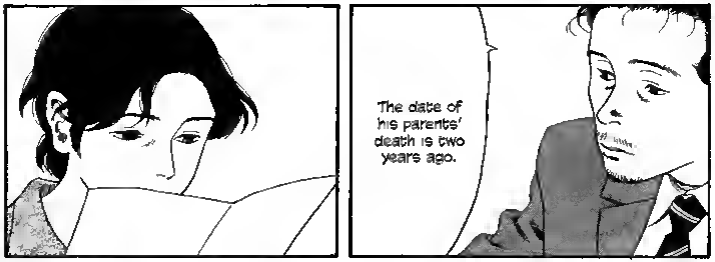
MANGA CAFE
TORIYA
PIANO SCHOOL
KARAOKE
KARAOKE
RAIMON
CHINESE RESTAURANT
KARAOKE
Big Echo
TORIYA

Besides, it's better than a café for when you have to talk about something important
Well, sometimes it's good to try something different.
It's been a while since I went to a karaoke place.


Now, if you could just take a peek at this...
Ah, sure
This is the family registry of your husband's parents that I got using that authorization you signed for me.

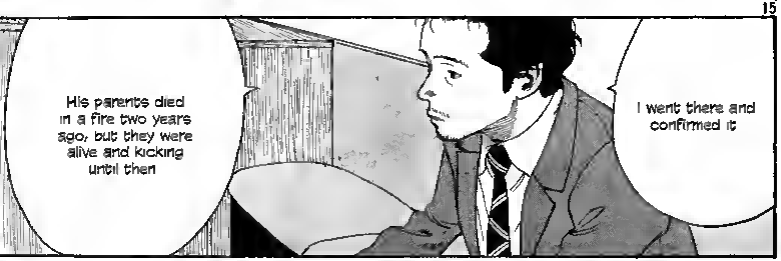

...Yamagata prefecture?
You said your husband was born in Hyougo prefecture, didn't you?


Ma'am, haven't you noticed while looking at that?
Oh, or was that just the institution where he was raised...
Yes, I'm certain he said he was born in Ono.


The date of his parents' death is two years ago.

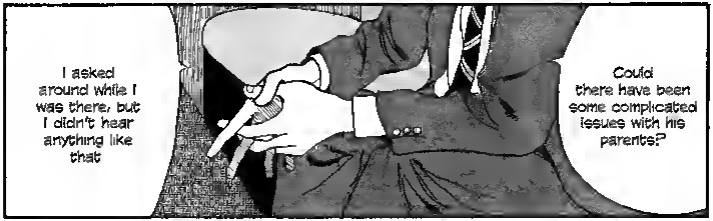
...What?

15

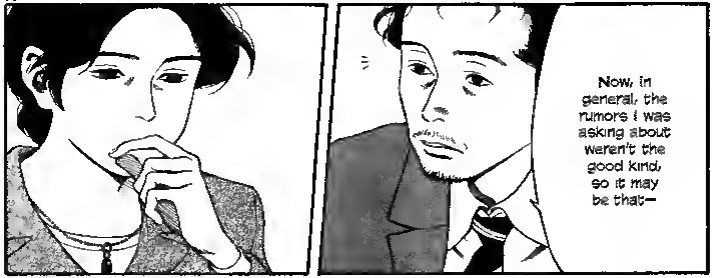

His parents died in a fire two years ago, but they were alive and kicking until then
I went there and confirmed it

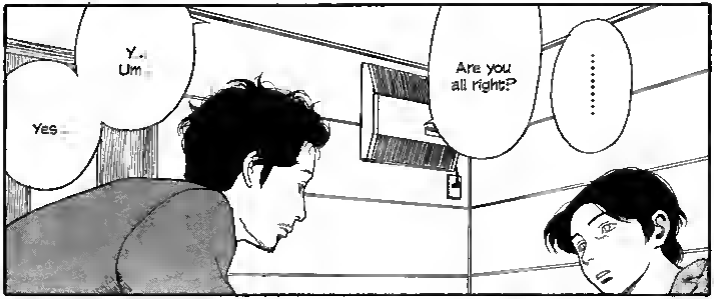
He was raised by his own parents until he graduated from high school.
Then what he said about being orphaned because of a traffic accident and being raised in an institution was...
.....
Later, after he graduated from college, it seems that he dropped out of touch with his family

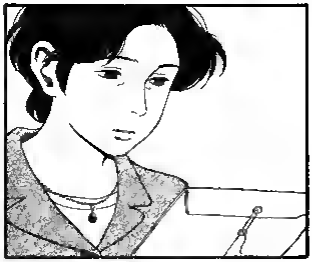
Why would your husband tell that sort of lie?


I asked around while I was there, but I didn't hear anything like that
Could there have been some complicated issues with his parents?

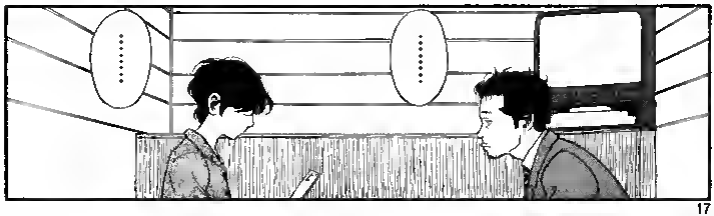
16


Now, in general, the rumors I was asking about weren't the good kind, so it may be that—


Y...
Um...
Yes...
Are you all right?
.....



.....
...Well, everything else is laid out in detail in this report, so please take a look at it afterwards.


.....
.....

17

Mmm...
カタッ

.....
ちう

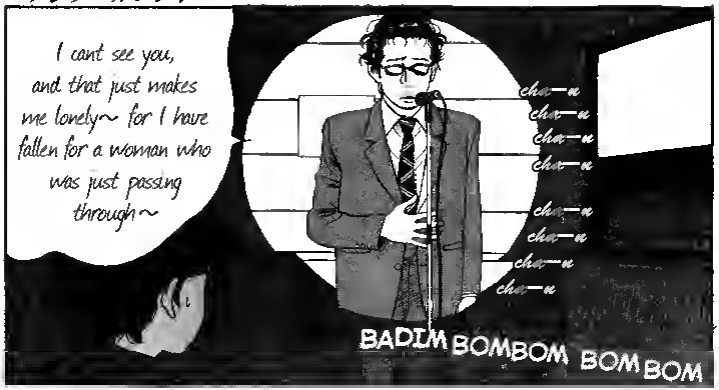
Huh?
Ma'am, would you like to sing a song?
Come on, we're in a karaoke joint, after all.

Then I'll sing one, all right?
No, no, it's fine, isn't it? Just every once in a while.
Hmm, what should I pick...
That... I'm not in the mood at all...

Oh, hey, they've even got a spotlight
Ahhh, it's been so long since I sang anything

18

Title:
"The Traitor's Journey"
Umm, all right then. I, Yamazaki Michio, shall humbly sing a song from the Down Town Boogie Woogie Band.


I cant see you, and that just makes me lonely~ for I have fallen for a woman who was just passing through~
cha—n
cha—n
cha—n
cha—n
cha—n
cha—n
cha—n
cha—n
BADIM BOMBOM BOM BOM

The pieces of my heart reflect in a blur in your crying face
I'm exhau~sted from a journey that's not even that long

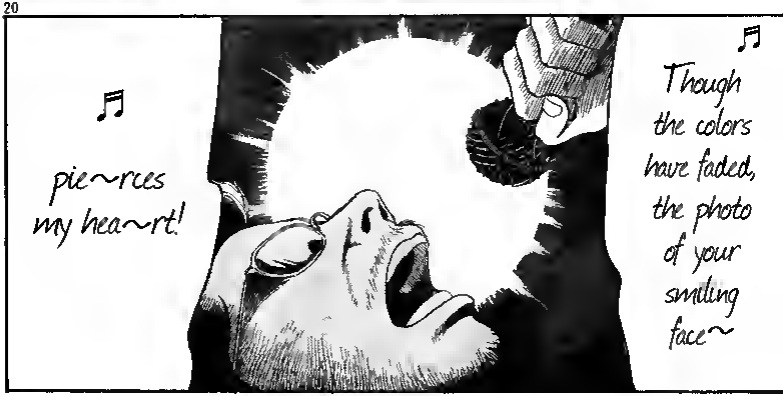
pie~ces my hea~rt!
Though the colors have faded, the photo of your smiling face~

The fa~ce of a trai~tor twists and warps
In the middle of the cracked mirror~

Although it's just the rest of a journey that's not even far, the streets where you live, recklessly~ nostalgically~ float into my hea~rt
♪
Is this the kindness of a woman who is passing through, to li~ve without deciding tomorrow's destination?
♬

In the middle of the cracked mirror~ the fa~ce of a tra~tor twists and warps
♬

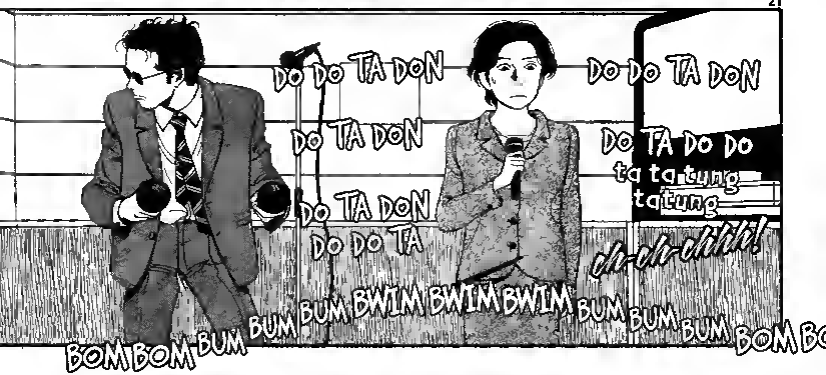
20


♬
pie~rces my hea~rt!
♬
Though the colors have faded, the photo of your smiling face~

Thank you for listening quietly
thank you.
Thank you.
clap
clap
clap
clap

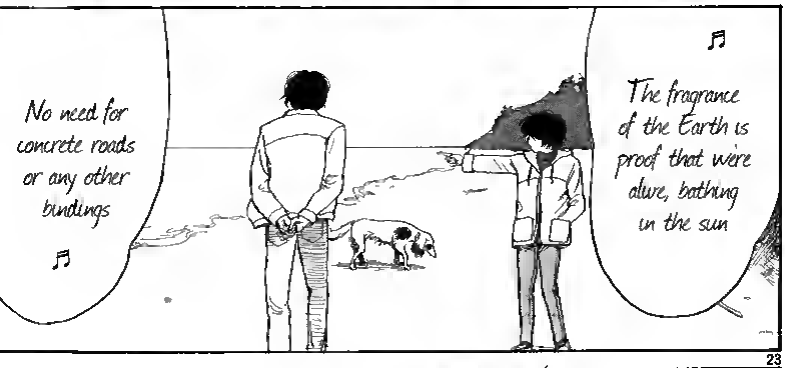
All right! Then, "Duca", let's go with "Duca"!
Well, that'd probably be...
Ma'am, how are you for Chara?
BEEP
BEEP

No, we can't have that; sometimes you just have to be ready for whatever life throws at you.
Huh? No, that's all right...
Well, you're up next, ma'am.
Hmm, what would be good...


DO DO TA DON
DO TA DON
DO TA DON
DO DO TA
DO DO TA DON
DO TA DO DO
ta ta tung
ta tung
cha-cha-chhh!
BOM BOM BUM
BUM BUM BWIM BWIM BWIM
BUM BUM BUM
BOM BO

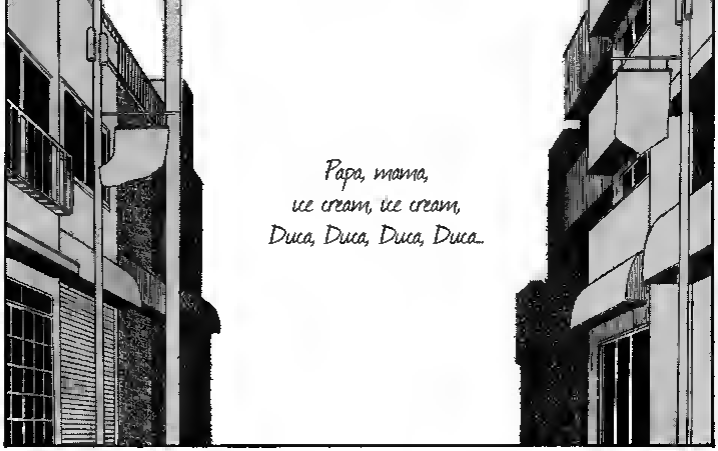
BOMBO
shaka
zuku
shaka
♪
A car with luggage passing by and a small girl and...
BUM
BO
♬
Quietly.. a barking dog, a concrete walkway
♪
Papa, new mama, Duca, Duca
♬
♬
Soap bubbles flying - reflected there are the face and heart of mama - ice cream
♬
I sense an aroma like that of my lover in the approaching wind~
♪

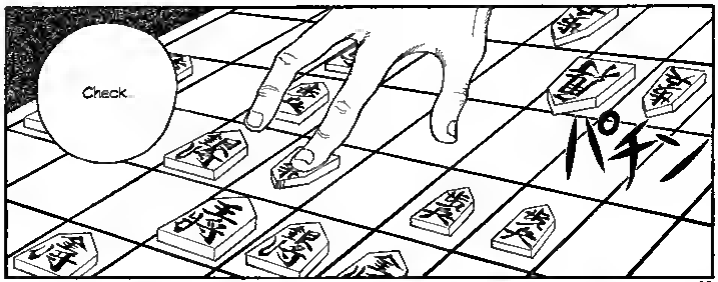
♪
Run, run, wait—the shape of that persons back!
♬
My Duca is running—dreaming


No need for concrete roads or any other buildings
♬
♬
The fragrance of the Earth is proof that we're alive, bathing in the sun

♪
Is it lonely becoming an adult, Duca?
♬
じわ
♬
Im so sorry—

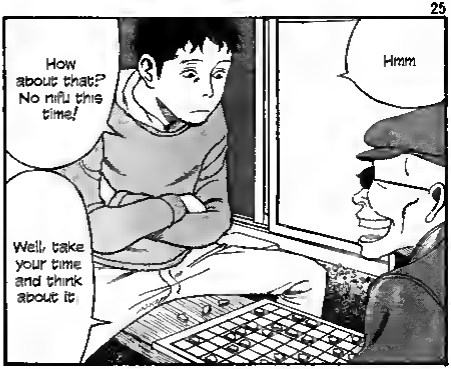
♬
I sense an aroma like that of my lover in the approaching wind～
♪
♬
I sense an aroma like that of my lover in the sun～
♪
24
♬
1, 2, 3, GO!
♬
An aroma like that～ Let's walk on the road that goes to the sea～ Let's walk
♪

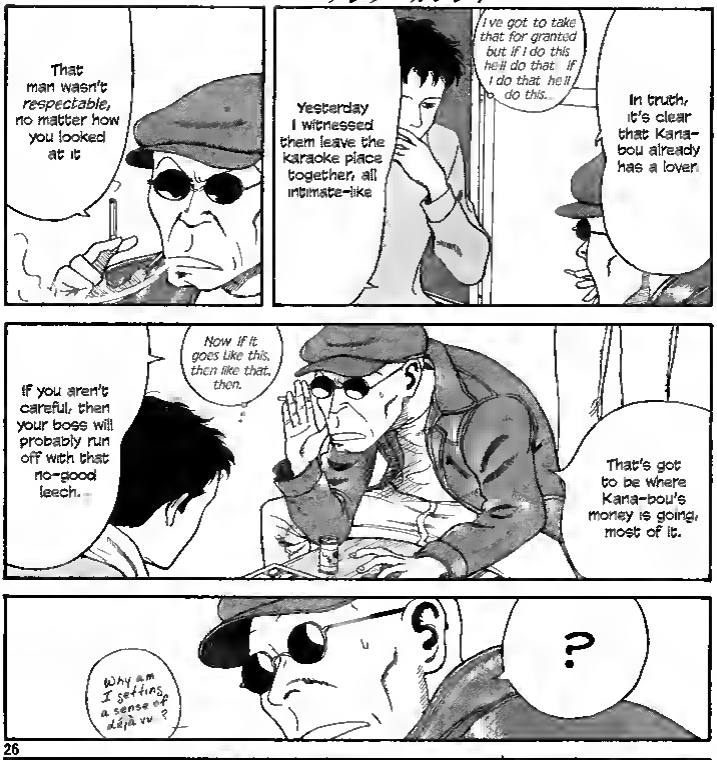

Papa, mama,
ice cream, ice cream,
Duca, Duca, Duca, Duca...


Check...
パチ

25

Sorry about being meaninglessly suspicious yesterday


How about that? No mifu this time!
Hmm
Well, take your time and think about it


That man wasn't *respectable*, no matter how you looked at it
Yesterday I witnessed them leave the karaoke place together, all intimate-like
I've got to take that for granted but if I do this he'll do that. If I do that he'll do this...
In truth, it's clear that Kana-bou already has a lover.
If you aren't careful, then your boss will probably run off with that no-good leech.
Now if it goes like this, then like that, then.
That's got to be where Kana-bou's money is going, most of it.
Why am I getting a sense of déjà vu?
?

AAAGG HHHH!
SABU-JII, YOU ARE *BANNED* FROM THIS HOUSE!
Ah, check and mate
UNDERCURRENT c.6 end

NCIS

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

UNDERCURRENT

C. 6

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Now recruiting
J>E translators and *experienced editors* willing to work on both ahoujo/josei and seinen

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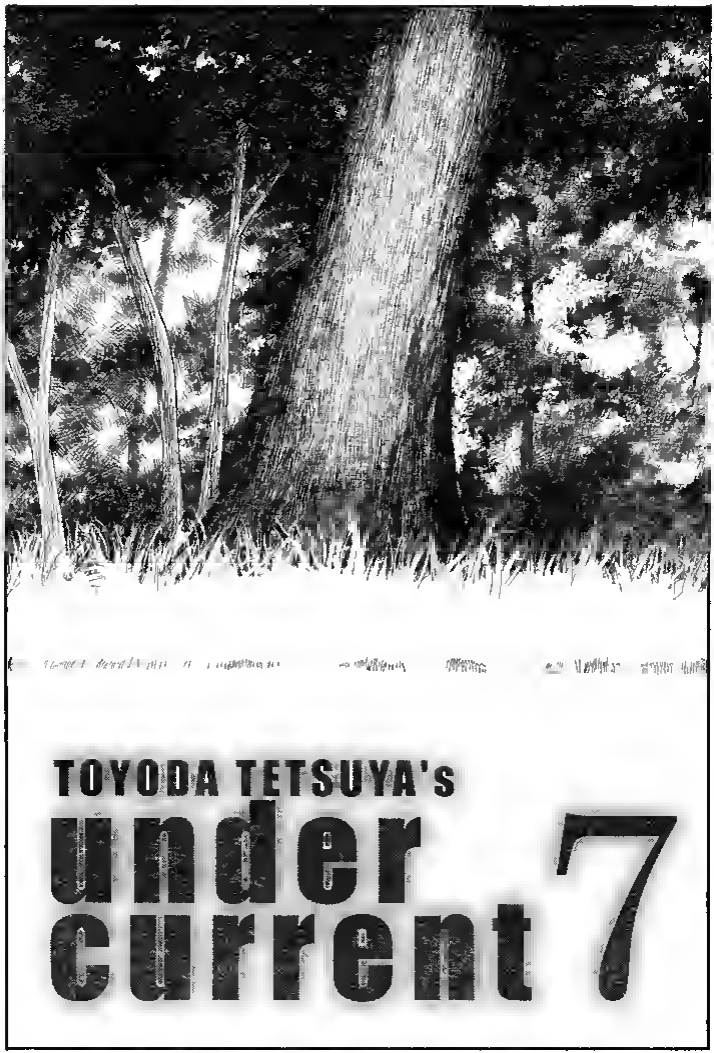
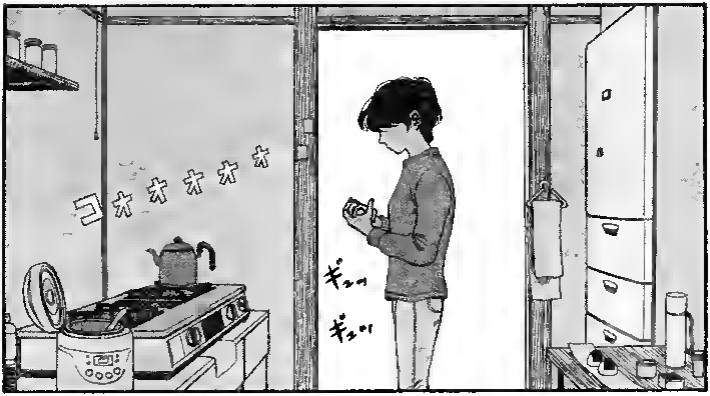
A few notes
That board game they're playing is shogi. Japanese chess. The note about nifu appeared in the news too, so you're not alone
Those delectable vegetables were cooked kinpira-style, which basically involves simmering them in as little liquid as possible
The songs can be viewed on Youtube at
http://tinyurl.com/yamazaki - Uragirimono no Tabi
http://tinyurl.com/kanae - Duca

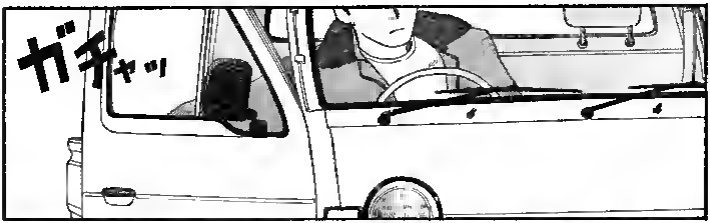


TOYODA TETSUYA'S

under current 7

She thought the only thing she didn t know anything about was the disappearance of her husband





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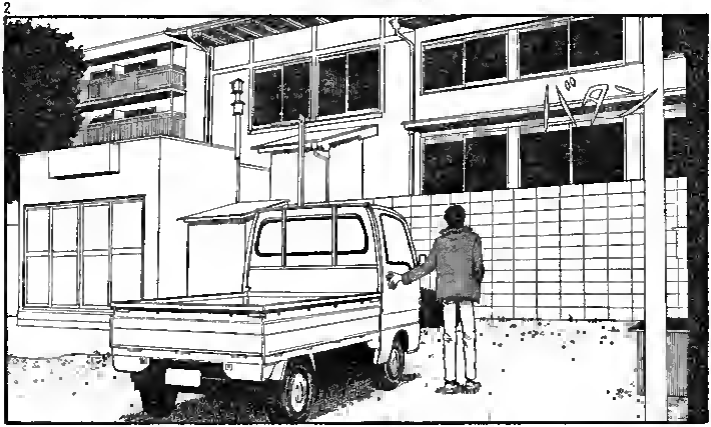
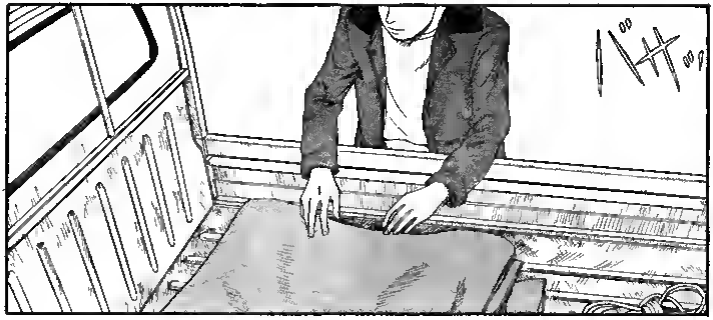
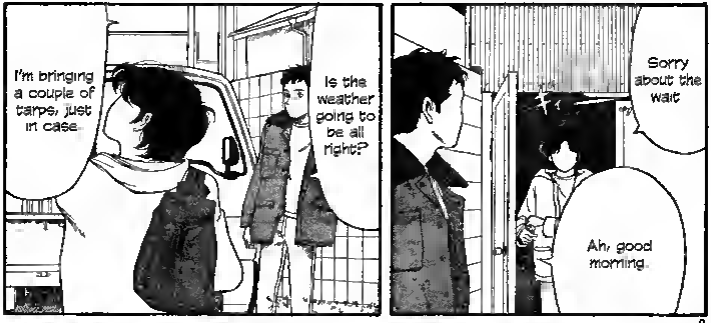
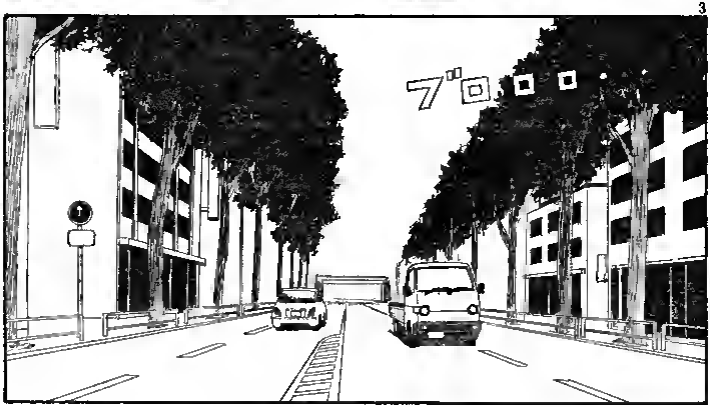


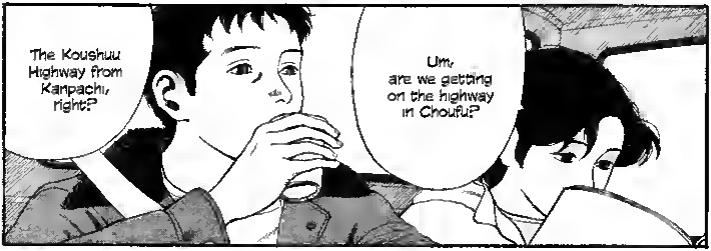


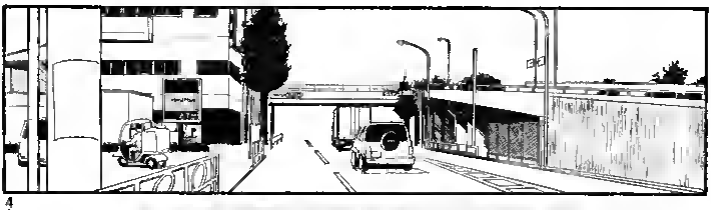

Sorry about the wait
Ah, good morning.
Is the weather going to be all right?
I'm bringing a couple of tarps, just in case.

3


ブロロロ

Want some tea?
Oh, yes, please
It's hot, so be careful


Um, are we getting on the highway in Choufu?
The Koushuu Highway from Kanpachi, right?



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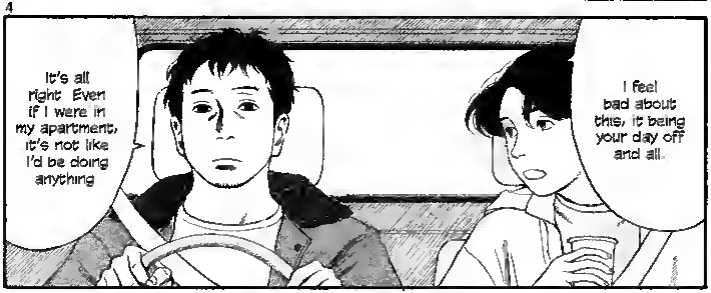
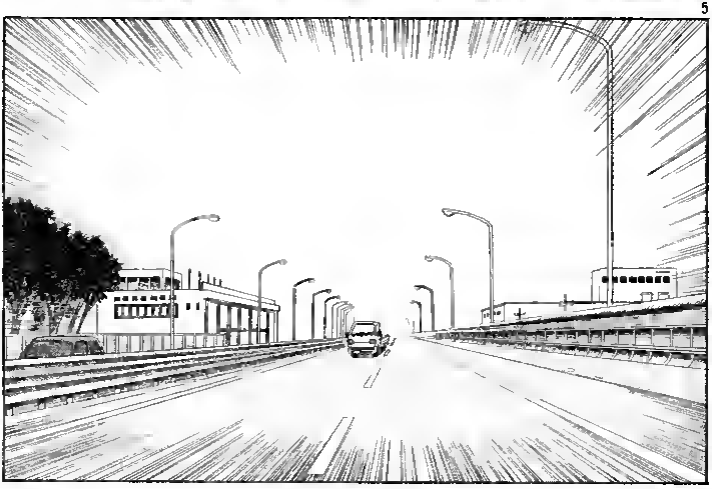
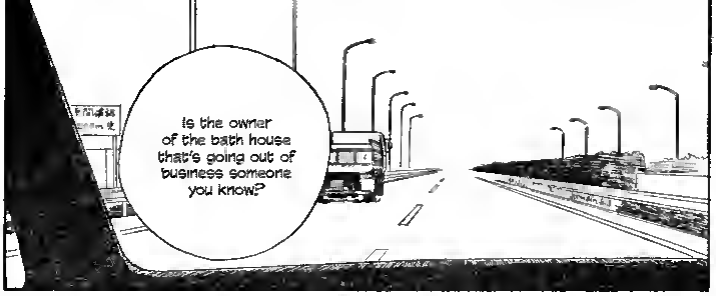

I feel bad about this, it being your day off and all.
It's all right. Even if I were in my apartment, it's not like I'd be doing anything

Don't you have any interests? Like, things you enjoy.
Interests? No... well, driving, I guess, taking trips and stuff
What do you usually do on your days off?
Nothing. I veg out. I go out on walks.

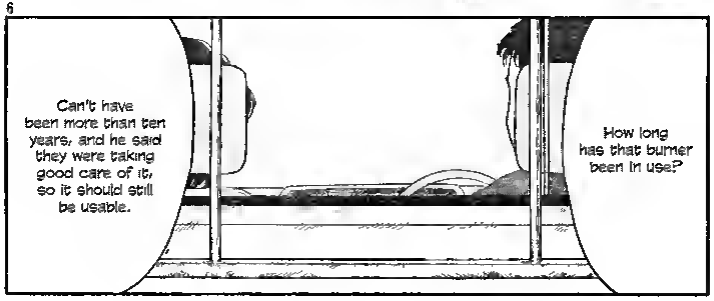
5




Is the owner of the bath house that's going out of business someone you know?

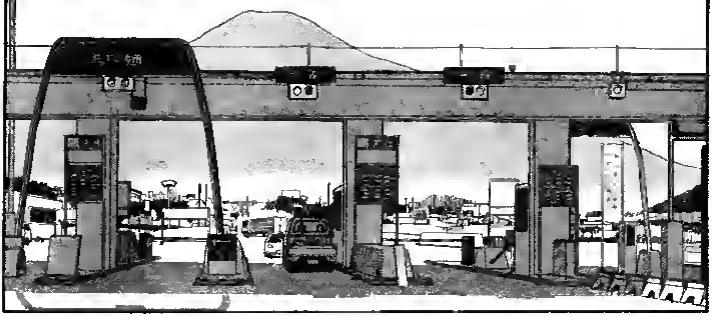
And it was from Toda-san that I heard Utsumi-san—that's the owner of the bath house—was closing up shop
No, I don't know them directly. The person who's handling the liquidation of that store's assets is Toda-san, one of my father's acquaintances

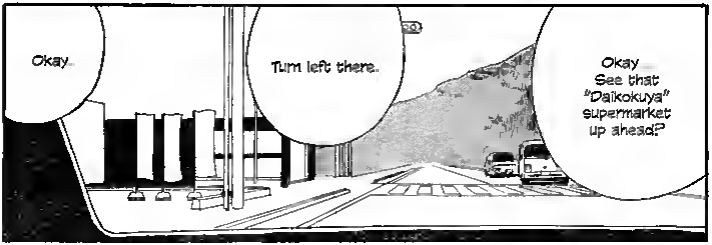
For some reason that's not what they did here, so Toda-san contacted me...
Normally, when these places go out of business, the equipment that can still be used goes through the association and is passed around to bath houses in the same area, but...

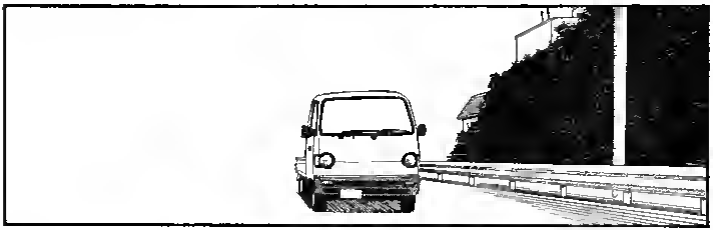

Can't have been more than ten years, and he said they were taking good care of it, so it should still be usable.
How long has that burner been in use?

Seems like it
And you're going to be out of a job, huh?
Tsuki no Yu is going to be able to burn oil, huh
And it's different from the old days... oil is a lot more expensive now...
Just kidding Even once we get the burner, we're not gonna be able to use it right away. It's going to be a pain retrofitting the boiler...
7
Well, it won't matter if you're always going to be around...
I'm... not always going to be around...
Firewood is cheap, but it's a lot of work...
It's just, when I thought about the future, it seemed like we'd switch over to oil at some point

I wouldn't say I'm particularly nomadic.
Are you going to wander around forever, then? A nomad's life?
That's not it.
You really don't talk about yourself, do you? Are you trying not to form unnecessary bonds because you're a drifter?
Sure it is!
8
You don't have to talk about me.
Well, as the navigator, I thought I should just keep on talking.
You put on that uninterested face and go around here and there, breaking girls' hearts, and then, when things go bad, you disappear without a trace.
Geez is your guard tight
What's gotten into you today?




Okay.
Turn left there.
Okay. See that "Daikokuya" supermarket up ahead?



9

The plan was to meet at 1, so we're a bit early.
12:30, huh...?

Hmm. Toda-san's phone number is...
Oh, here we go.

Hmm?
Huh? What do you mean?
Yes. Yes
Hello? Is this Toda-san?
Hi, this is Kanae.
Yeah, we're already pretty close
I'm not really sure, but it seems like something happened
What's up?
Turn right over there.
I see.
Well, we'll be there soon, so yes
10
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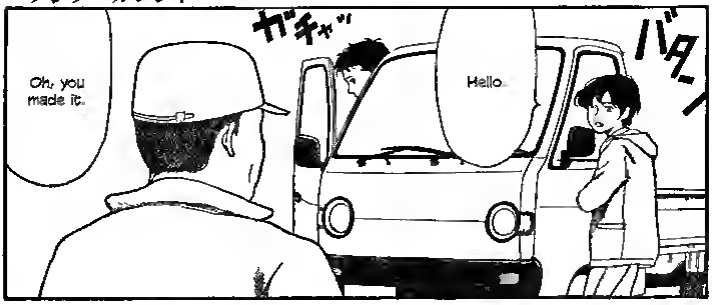
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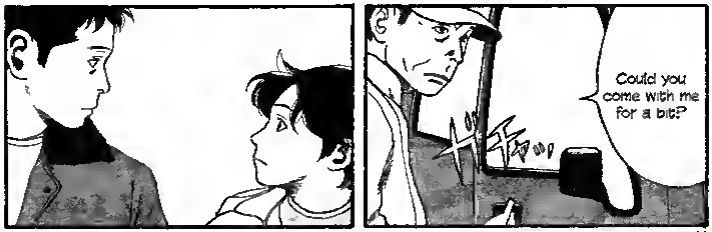
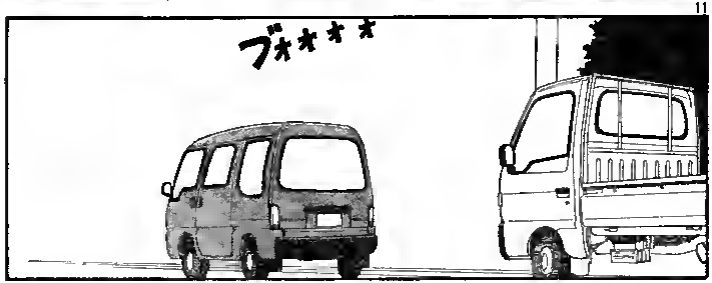
Oh, you made it.
Hello.

Well, that's...
What happened? Something big, you said?


Could you come with me for a bit?

11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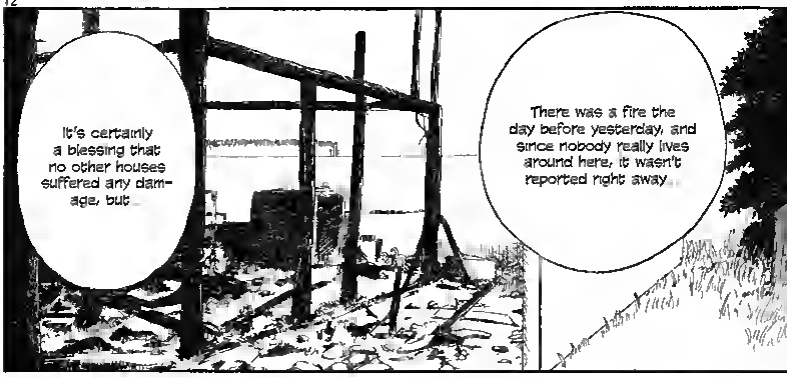
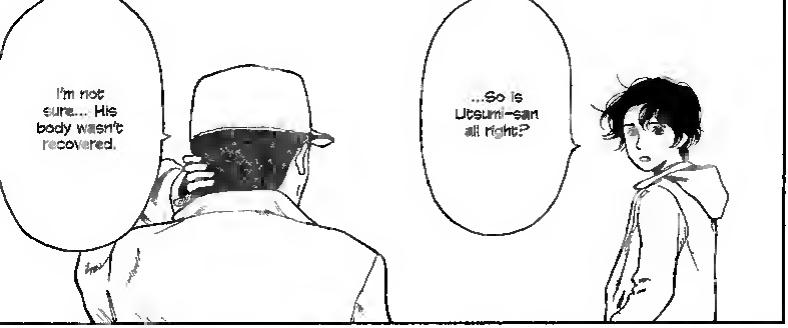
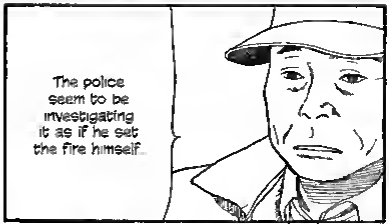

It's certainly a blessing that no other houses suffered any damage, but...
There was a fire the day before yesterday, and since nobody really lives around here, it wasn't reported right away...


I'm not sure... His body wasn't recovered.
...So is Utsumi-san all right?

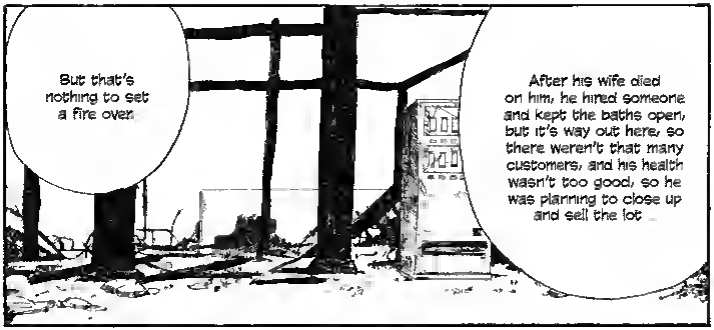
He wasn't here. He disappeared somewhere.
Huh? What do you mean?

Why? Why would he have had to set it on fire?
Err, I don't know, I'm not sure, but...


The police seem to be investigating it as if he set the fire himself.

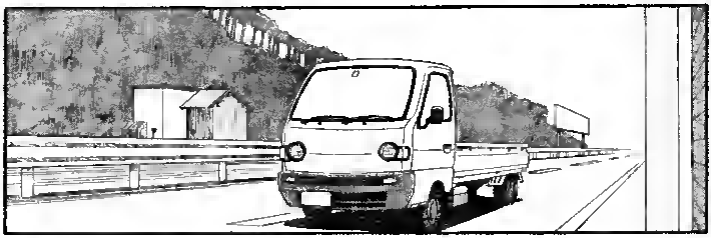
13

What...?


But that's nothing to set a fire over.
After his wife died on him, he hired someone and kept the baths open, but it's way out here, so there weren't that many customers, and his health wasn't too good, so he was planning to close up and sell the lot...

When I saw him three days ago he seemed the same as usual, but...
The fact that he had to hand over his equipment might have also caused some friction.

No... No, that's...
Sorry to drag you out here for nothing.
Well, so the burner and everything else went up in smoke

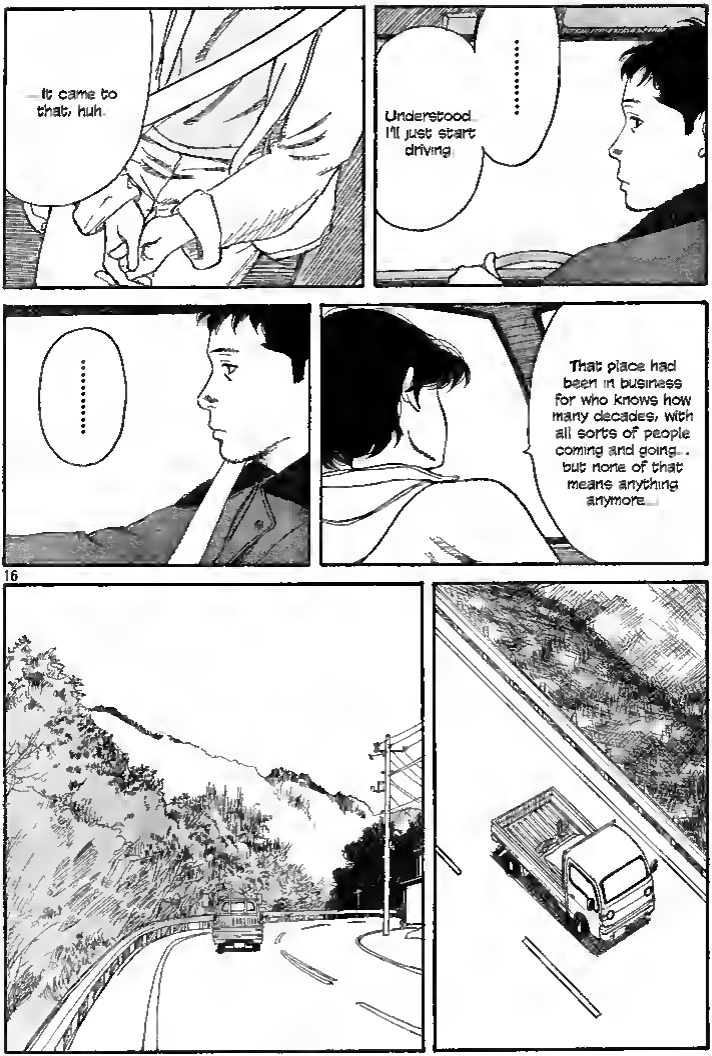


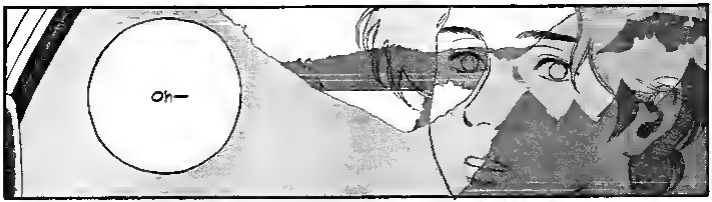
Are we getting on the highway at the Ootsuki Interchange?

15

Isn't there something that can lighten the mood...? I don't want to head straight back like this

...Let's just drive somewhere pretty...
Huh?


It came to that, huh.
Understood. I'll just start driving.
That place had been in business for who knows how many decades, with all sorts of people coming and going... but none of that means anything anymore...


Oh—

I can see water...
Could you drive over that way a bit?
Okay.

17

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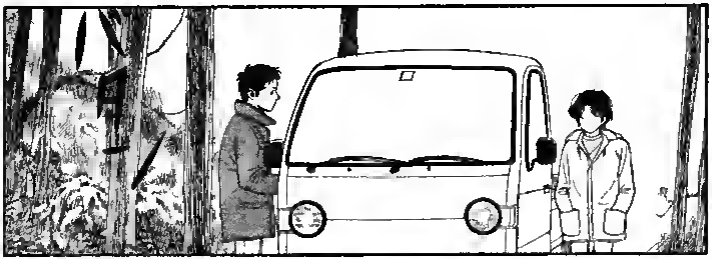

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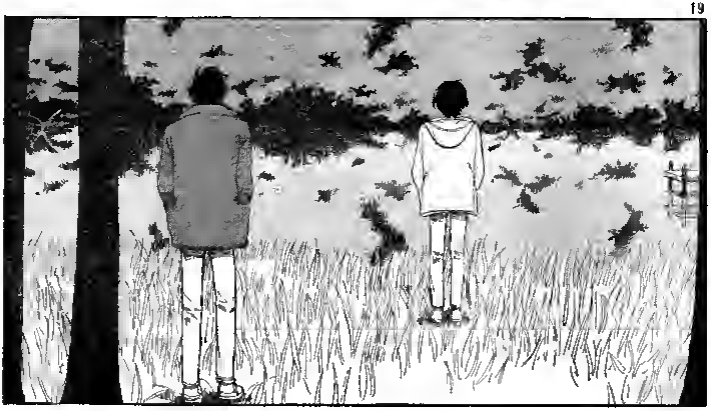

I'll go get the tea.
Kind of chilly, huh?
20
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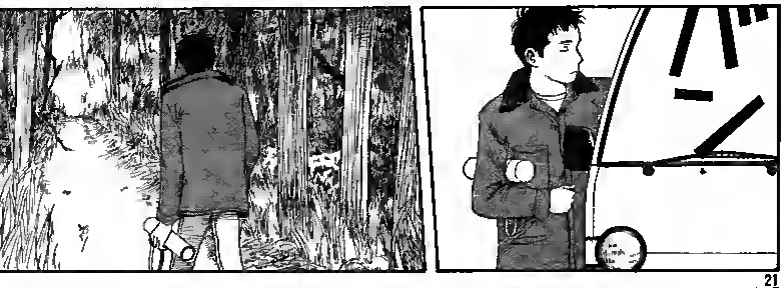

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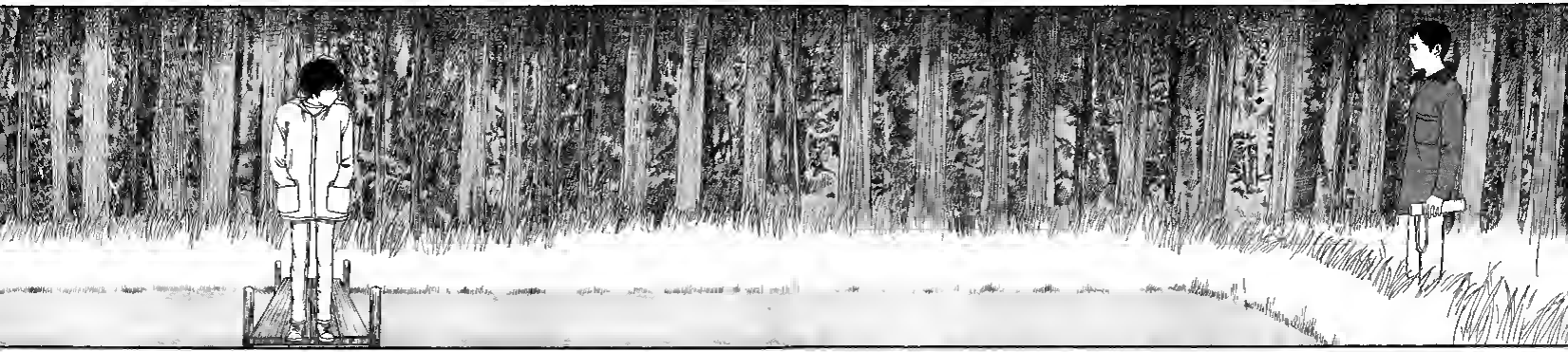

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...There's this dream I've had for the longest time.

In this dream, I'm always crying. Sometimes I look younger, sometimes older...
And then someone comes and comforts me, but I don't know who it is.

After that, that someone wraps their hands around my neck slowly and gently...
And as I'm being strangled, I'm plunged into a deep pool of water—
While this is happening, I'm not sure if I'm scared or calm
The only thing I know is that this is what I desire the most
I'm not sure if that's the desire of my dream self or if it's the desire of my real self, but—
It's a weird dream, isn't it...?

Never standing out, never talking, never intervening. Has Hori's aloofness changed after meeting Kanae?

UNDERCURRENT c7 end

NCIS

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

UNDERCURRENT

C. 7

#NCIS@irc.irchighway.net

This may be my favorite chapter yet. (But then, most of them have been.)

Now recruiting
J>E translators and *experienced editors* willing to work on both shoujo/josei and seinen

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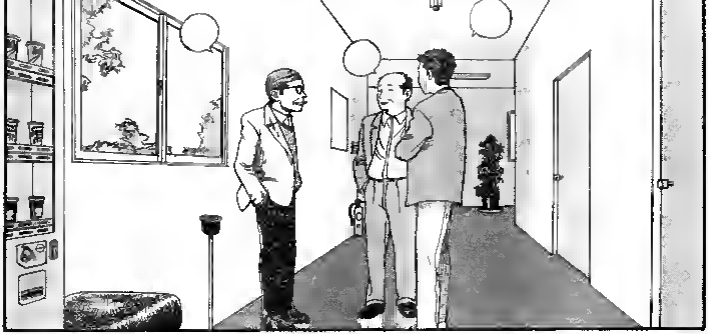
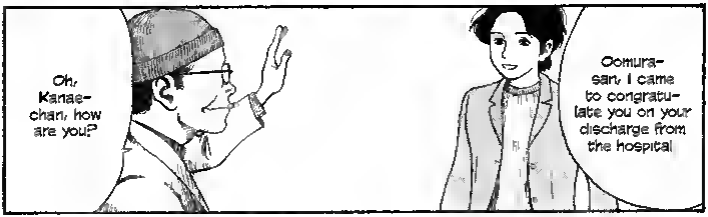
She thought that if she couldn't understand what happened and her wounds didn't heal, then she wouldn't be able to move on



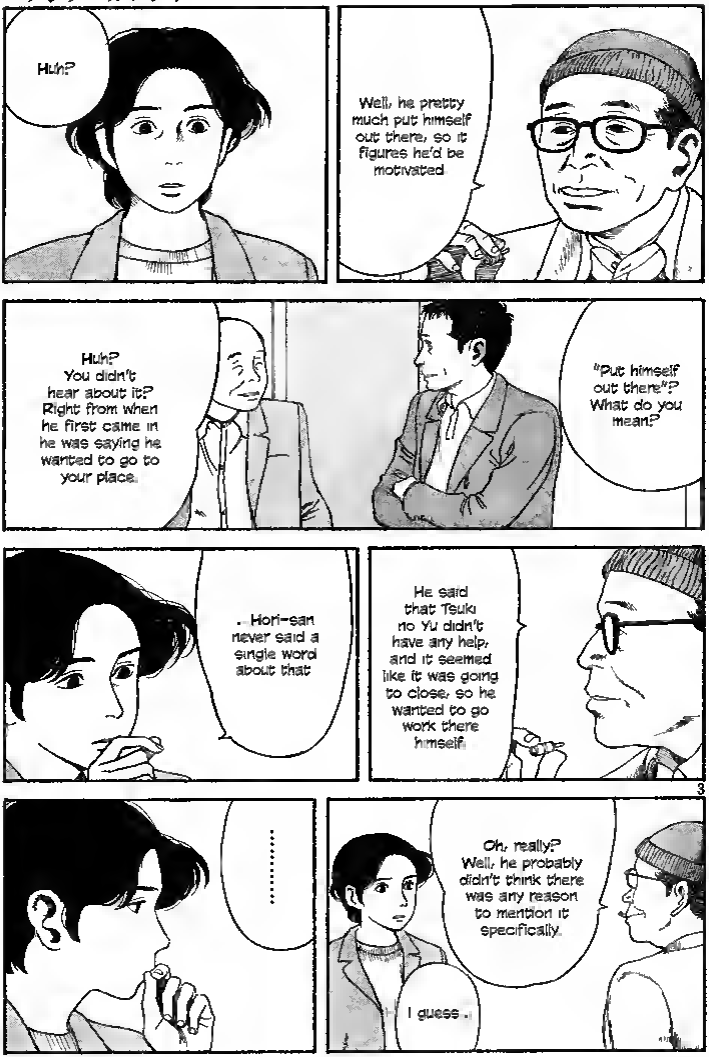

Oh, Kanae-chan, how are you?
Oomura-san, I came to congratulate you on your discharge from the hospital

It was nothing major, ha ha ha
I wanted to come by and thank you for introducing someone who could lend a hand, but then that happened

You were hospitalized so suddenly that it surprised me.

2

Yes, he's working hard.
Oh—is he doing a good job?
It's a little late, but Thank you very much You really helped me out.
Oh—is that right, is that right


Huh?
Well, he pretty much put himself out there, so it figures he'd be motivated.
Huh? You didn't hear about it? Right from when he first came in he was saying he wanted to go to your place.
"Put himself out there"? What do you mean?
. Hori-san never said a single word about that.
He said that Tsuki no Yu didn't have any help, and it seemed like it was going to close, so he wanted to go work there himself.
3
.....
Oh, really? Well, he probably didn't think there was any reason to mention it specifically.
I guess.

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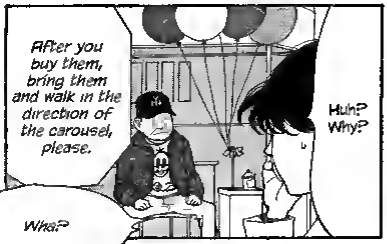
ゴシゴシ
ゴシゴシ
...No, it's nothing.
...? What is it?
4
Okay.
Um, I'm going out again tomorrow afternoon.

5

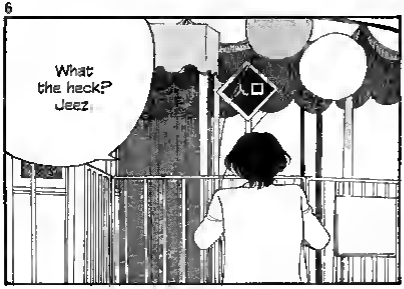
That's right. Do you see the stand selling balloons up ahead?
Huh? Straight?
Please just keep on walking straight ahead.
Ah— Yamazaki-san, where are you?
Ah, there it is.


After you buy them, bring them and walk in the direction of the carousel, please.
Huh? Why?
What?

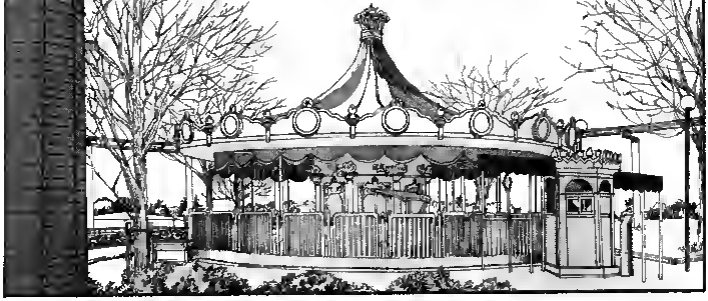
Please buy one red and one yellow balloon there.

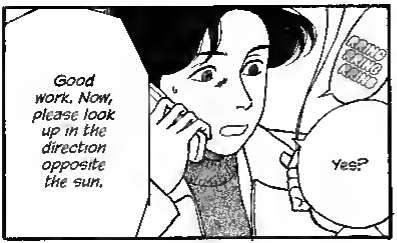
There will be an entrance to the carousel after you walk a little further, so ride the wooden horses there, please.
And then? What should I do after that?
What?!

6


What the heck? Jeez.
入口

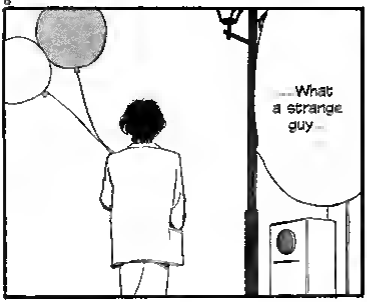
Hey, Yamazaki-san, stop messi—
I'll contact you again. Until next time.
!!

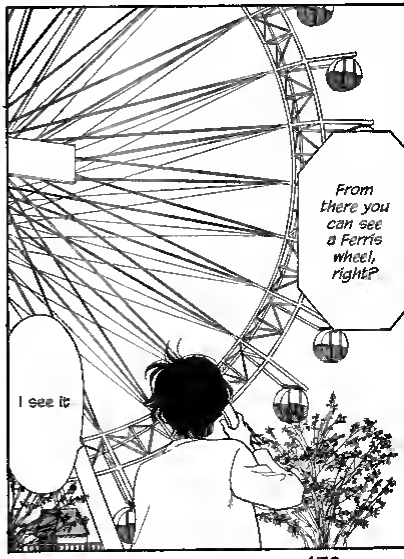


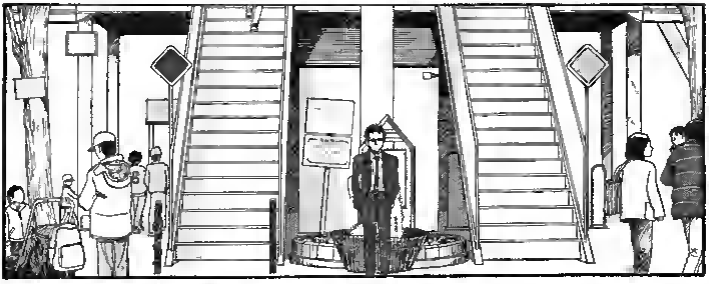

Good work. Now, please look up in the direction opposite the sun.
RING RING RING
Yes?

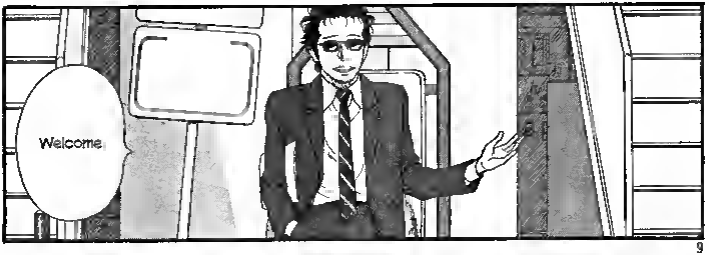
Then please walk in that direction.

8


...What a strange guy...


From there you can see a Ferris wheel, right?
I see it.

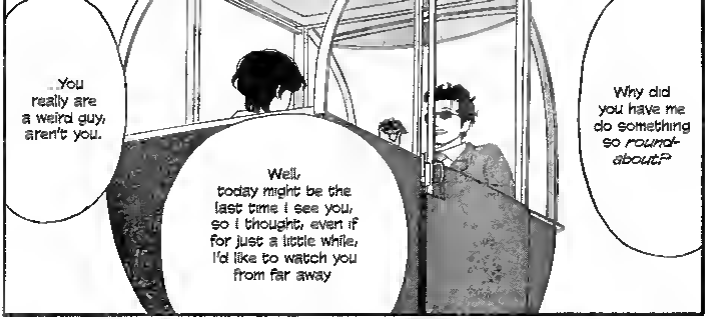



Welcome.

9

Let's ride this next.

Here, your balloons!
I hadn't ridden on one of those carousels in twenty years!
ドーン
Oh, thanks.


...You really are a weird guy, aren't you.
Well, today might be the last time I see you, so I thought, even if for just a little while, I'd like to watch you from far away
Why did you have me do something so *round-about*?

When I was a girl, there were only a few times I got to go to an amusement park.
Yes, to be honest, it was fun.
But didn't it feel nice on the carousel?

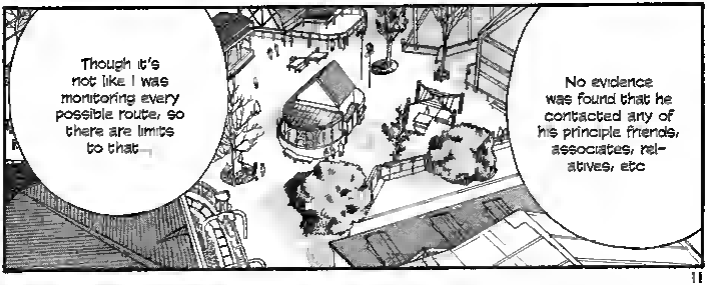
How have you been recently? Anything new come up?

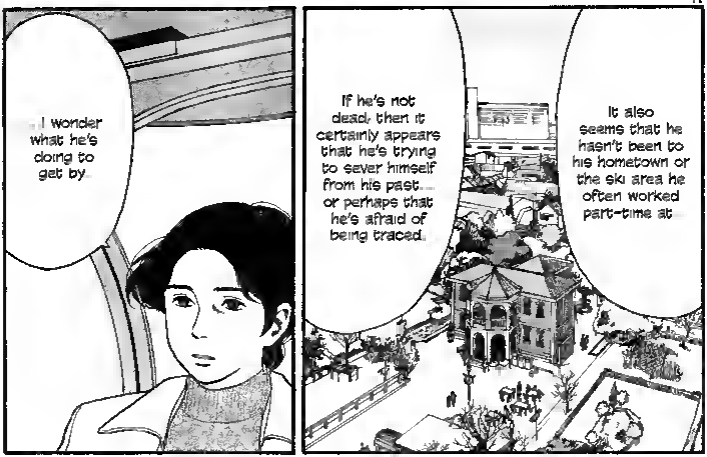
10

Then I suppose this is something like a final report...

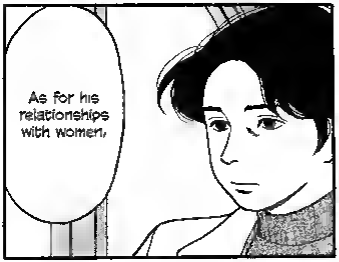
There hasn't been any contact from him, anyway
I see...
Um, hmm... I don't think anything really has

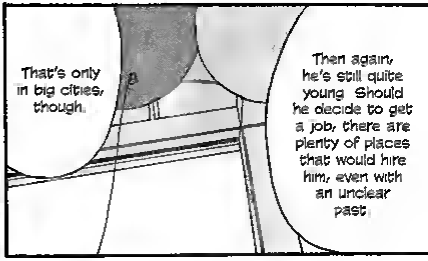
Well, it's not really a legal method of investigation, but if he were, say, secretly withdrawing money, we'd be able to figure out where he was
On the exact day of his disappearance, all of the money in his bank account was withdrawn. From that day forwards, there has been no further activity, deposits or otherwise


Though it's not like I was monitoring every possible route, so there are limits to that...
No evidence was found that he contacted any of his principle friends, associates, relatives, etc

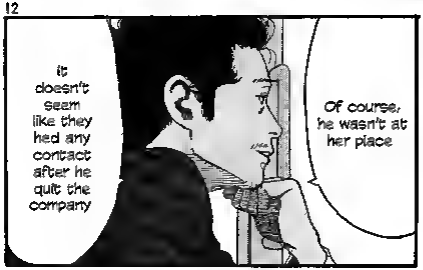

I wonder what he's doing to get by...
If he's not dead, then it certainly appears that he's trying to sever himself from his past... or perhaps that he's afraid of being traced.
It also seems that he hasn't been to his hometown or the ski area he often worked part-time at

Also, it looks like his parent's house—which burned down—was rented, so it'd appear that there weren't any particular assets to inherit.
Well, there seemed to be just the bare minimum in his bank account, so if he's been living like he's on the run, he would've run out fairly quickly.

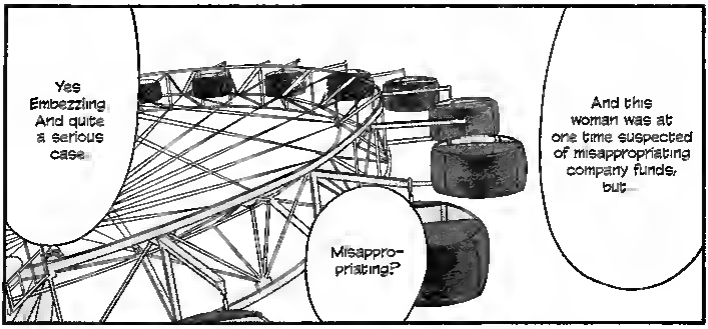

As for his relationships with women,

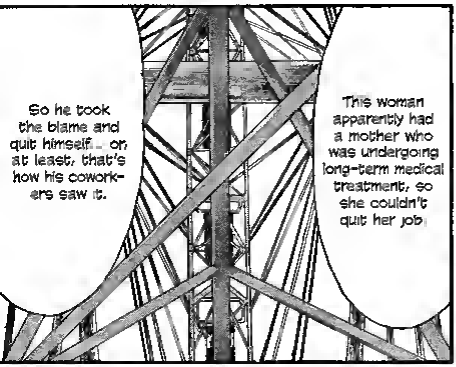

That's only in big cities, though.
Then again, he's still quite young. Should he decide to get a job, there are plenty of places that would hire him, even with an unclear past.

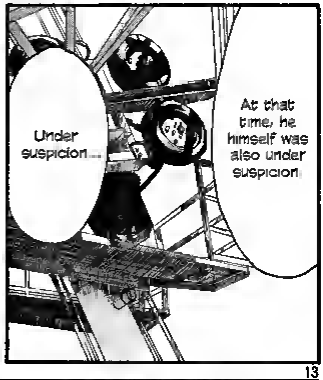
However, when he was still working at the company—this is while he was dating you—
these past few years—this is after he married you—there was no sign of another woman, as far as I could determine.


It doesn't seem like they had any contact after he quit the company.
Of course, he wasn't at her place.

there seemed to be a female coworker he was close to.

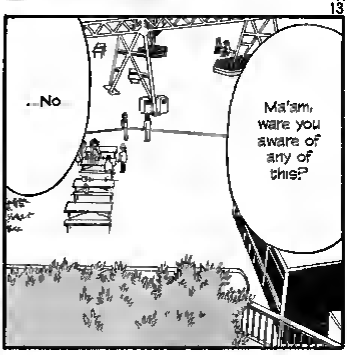

Yes. Embezzling. And quite a serious case.
Misappropriating?
And this woman was at one time suspected of misappropriating company funds, but—


So he took the blame and quit himself... or, at least, that's how his coworkers saw it.
This woman apparently had a mother who was undergoing long-term medical treatment, so she couldn't quit her job.

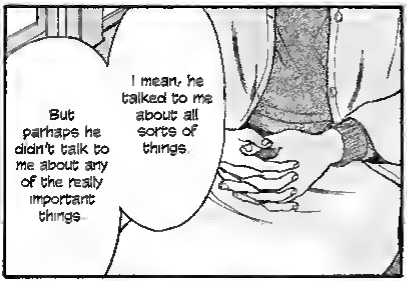

Under suspicion...
At that time, he himself was also under suspicion.

13

But I do remember thinking there was something strange about him not inviting anyone from his company to the wedding ceremony...
Things like that.

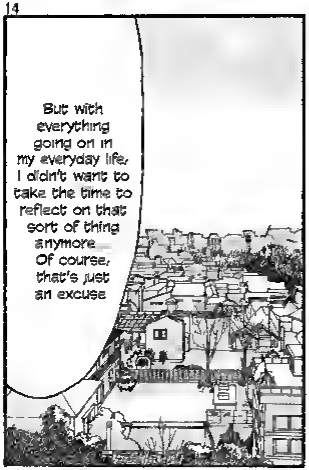

...No.
Ma'am, were you aware of any of this?

Was he the type to keep secrets to himself?
So, his parents, that incident. It's surprising that he never talked to you about these big issues.


But perhaps he didn't talk to me about any of the really important things.
I mean, he talked to me about all sorts of things.

What kind of man he was. I can't honestly say I know all that well anymore.

14

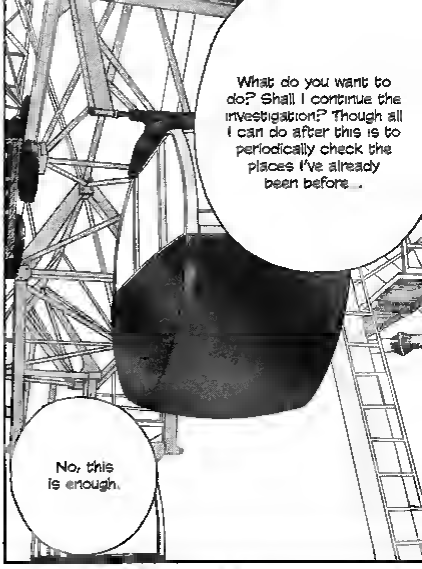

But with everything going on in my everyday life, I didn't want to take the time to reflect on that sort of thing anymore. Of course, that's just an excuse.

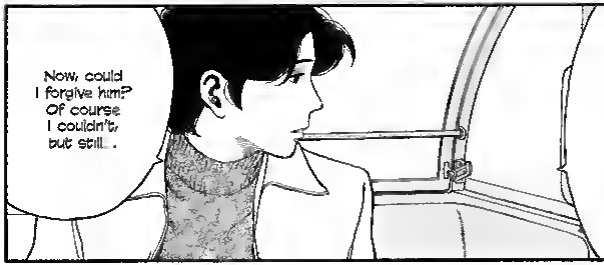
I think I felt that that was what he was saying in his silence, with his slight expressions and his pauses.
When I try to recall now, I remember how it sometimes seemed like he wanted to tell me something important.

I might be being rude, but when I first met you, your hands were pretty rough. That's not the case anymore, though.
Running a bath house is a tough job.
No, I understand, that's just how every-day life is.
Are you going to continue with the bath house even if he doesn't come back?
But right now there's someone helping me, so for the most part, it's gotten easier.
...After he disappeared, I was doing all the work by myself, so...

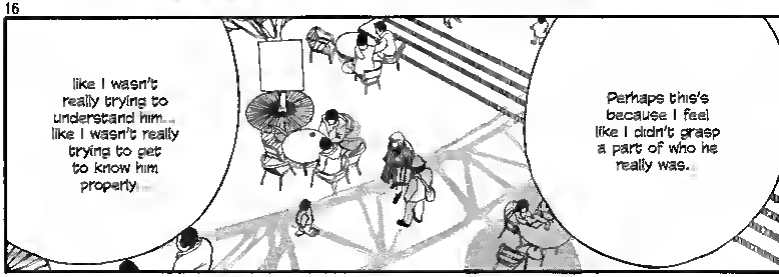
So, three months have passed...
In the end, I really like this job, so I think I want to try to do it as long as I'm able.
Yes. I had thought about quitting before, but...

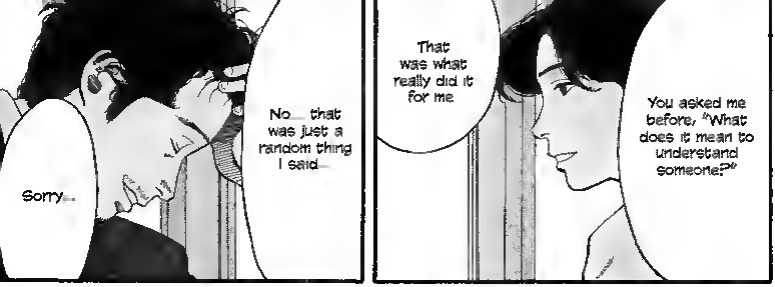
It seems like he has no intention of returning, after all...
And that may have been what it was all about.

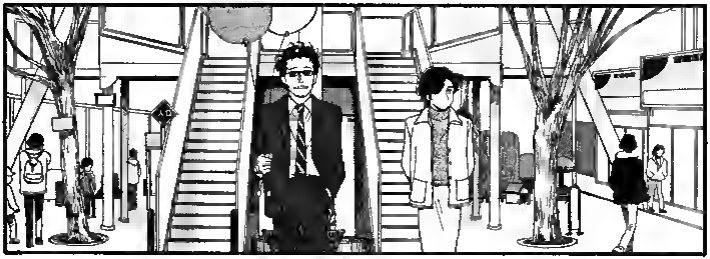

What do you want to do? Shall I continue the investigation? Though all I can do after this is to periodically check the places I've already been before...
No, this is enough.


Now, could I forgive him? Of course I couldn't, but still...
When he disappeared, I was shocked, saddened, angered, wounded... but it's strange... I don't even hate him that much.

16

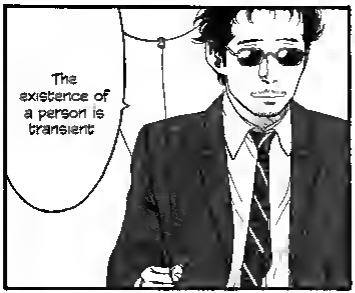

like I wasn't really trying to understand him... like I wasn't really trying to get to know him properly...
Perhaps this's because I feel like I didn't grasp a part of who he really was...

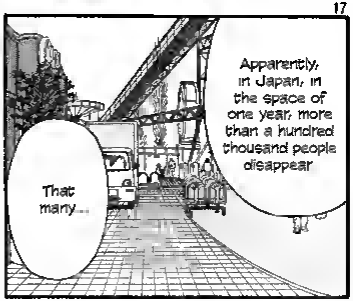

Sorry...
No... that was just a random thing I said...
That was what really did it for me
You asked me before, "What does it mean to understand someone?"



Well, it's not like I did a half-ass investigation, but the chances of finding him were low.
To be honest, people who disappear generally aren't found.

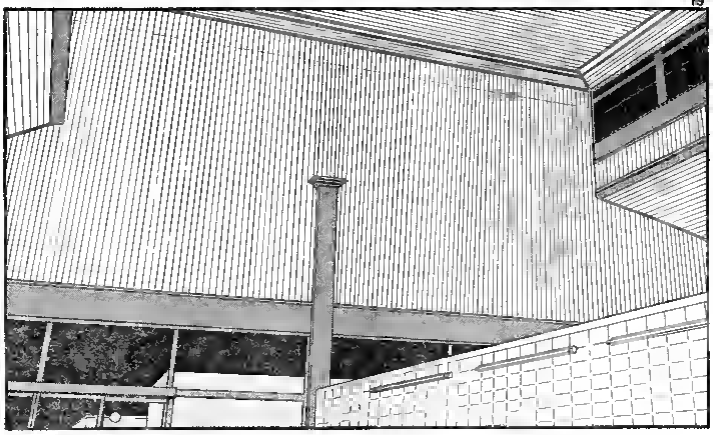
17

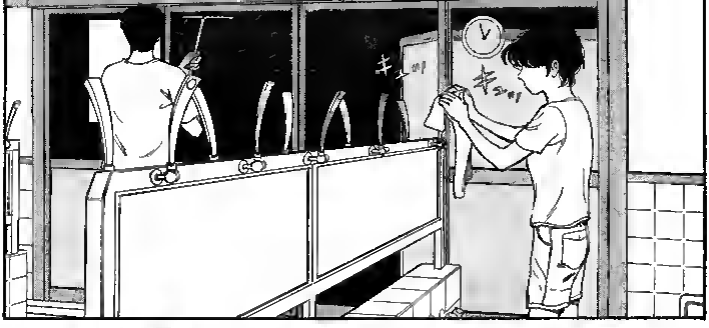

The existence of a person is transient

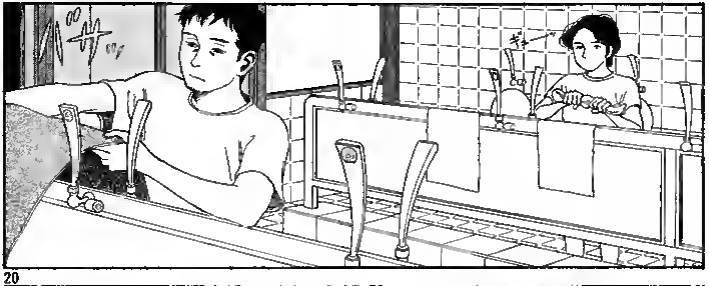

That many...
Apparently, in Japan, in the space of one year, more than a hundred thousand people disappear

Just like this.
GYA HA HA HA HA!
Huh?! I guess!
Yamazaki-san, you really like theatrics, don't you?
I'd really like to thank you for everything
No, you helped me with a lot of things, Yamazaki-san.
No, in the end I wasn't any help at all.
I'm sorry I made you do all that work even though I wasn't really paying you
It's no problem

19



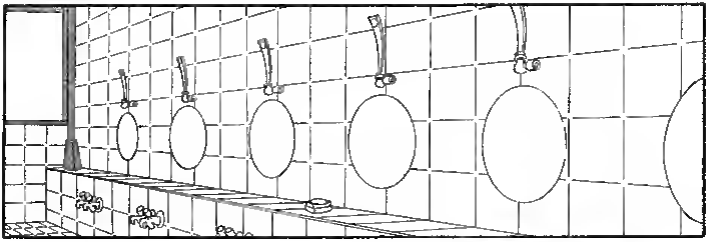


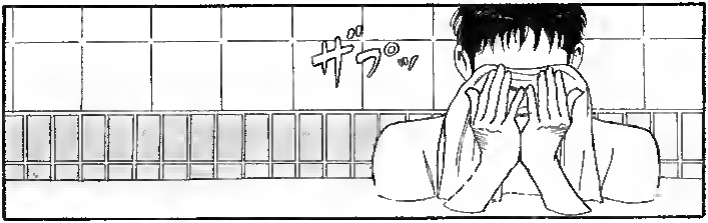


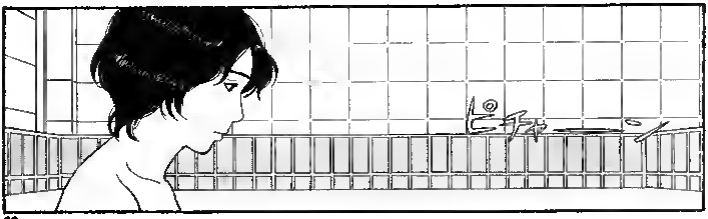
20

"Right from when he first came in he was saying he wanted to go to your place"

Ah, no, nothing...
What is it?
21



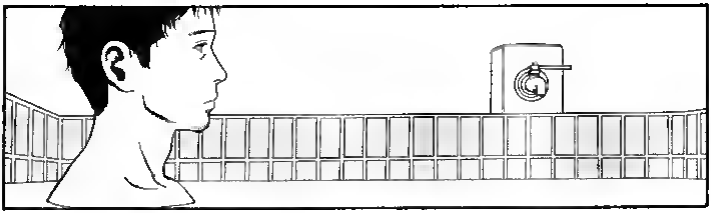


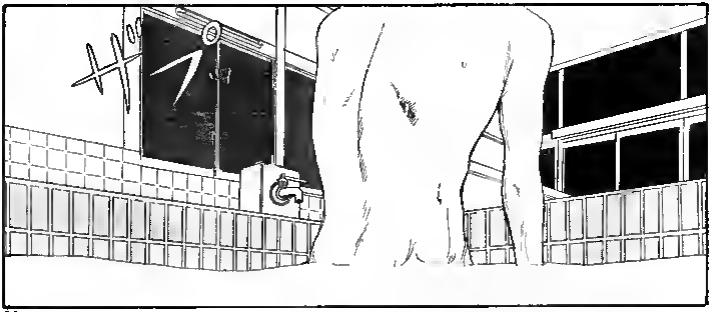


22

Is there something you want to tell me?
Huh?
Is this about what you asked me in the car?
THAT'S NOT IT! UM, IT'S ABOUT... THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE! UHHH, IT'S NOT THA—
AH! N-NO! THAT ISN'T REALLY—

If it were about what I asked you in the car, would you be able to answer?
.....





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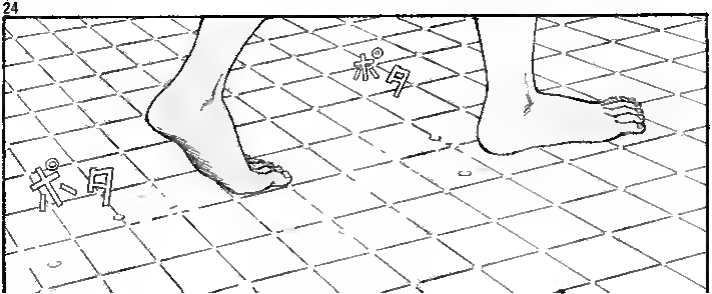
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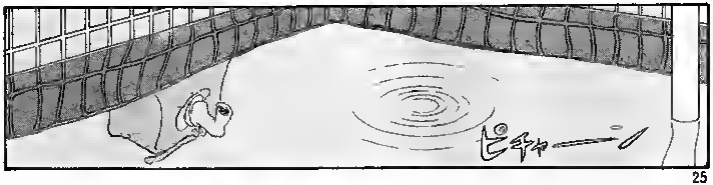
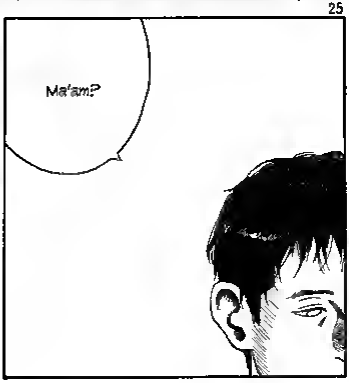


25



26

UNDERCURRENT ch.8 end

Kanae is forced to remember
———— next chapter

An unchanging distance in mundane commonplace
Even if one thing has been resolved, it's not like it all would change

NCIS

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

UNDERCURRENT

C. 8

#NCIS@irc.irchighway.net

This may be my favorite chapter yet. (But then, most of them have been.)

Now recruiting
J>E translators and *experienced editors* willing to work on both shoujo/josei and seinen

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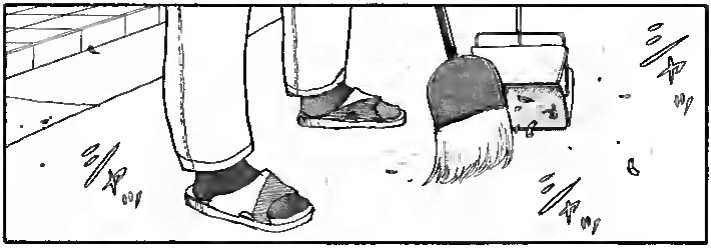
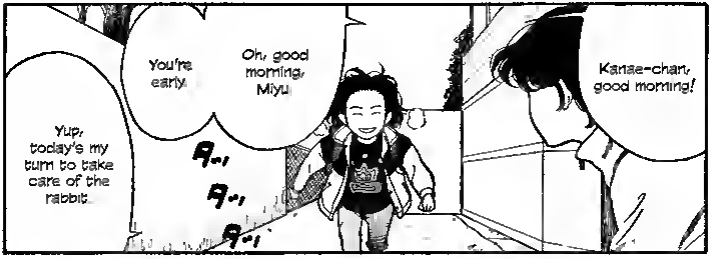
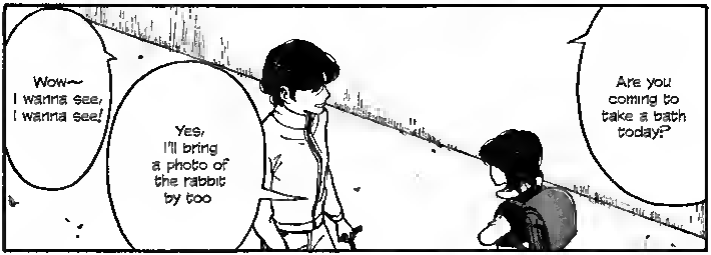
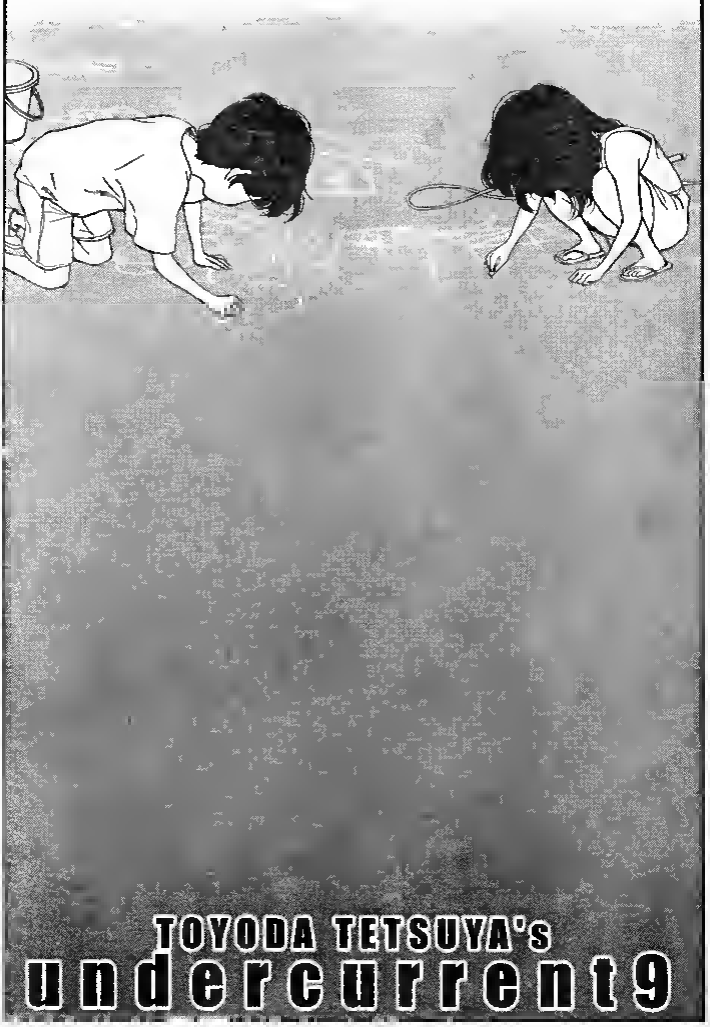



Karise-chan, good morning!
Oh, good morning, Miyu
You're early
Yup, today's my turn to take care of the rabbit
Q-u
Q-u
Q-u

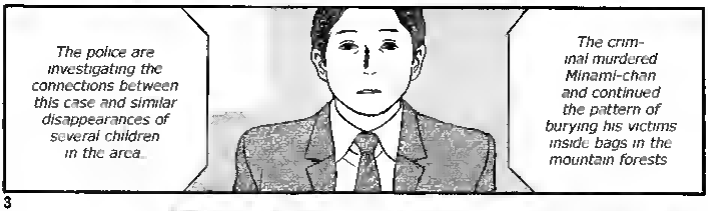

Are you coming to take a bath today?
Yes, I'll bring a photo of the rabbit by too
Wow~ I wanna see, I wanna see!

'Bye! See you later!
See you later!



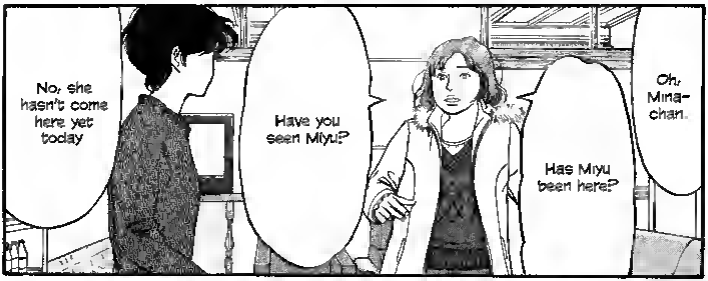
The truth catches up with her

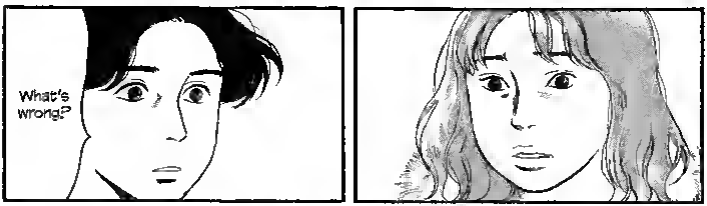
She lives with the people she relies on in the bath house her parents left behind for her. These irreplaceable days pass her by.


The police are investigating the connections between this case and similar disappearances of several children in the area.
The criminal murdered Minami-chan and continued the pattern of burying his victims inside bags in the mountain forests

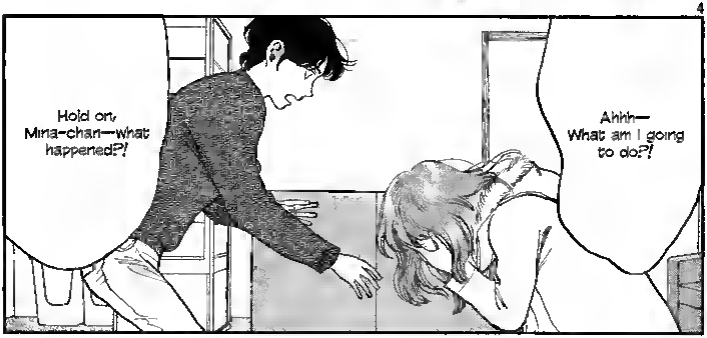
3

ガラッ


No, she hasn't come here yet today
Have you seen Miyu?
Oh, Mina-chan.
Has Miyu been here?


What's wrong?

4

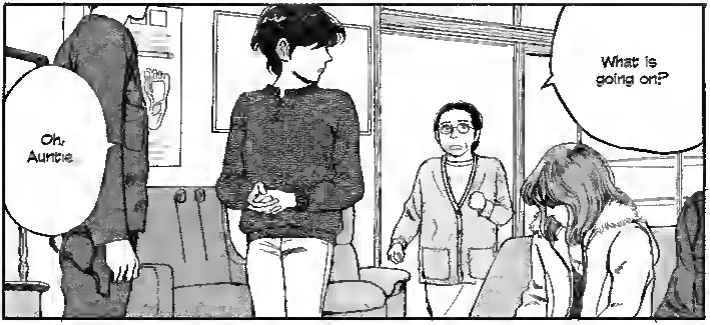

Hold on, Mina-chan—what happened?!
Ahhh— What am I going to do?!

Huh?!
...Miyu is gone...! Her backpack was lying in the road!
Her friends' houses, the library... I've already tried asking all the places she might have gone, but they all said she's not there
What do you mean? She wasn't at the children's center or a friend's house?
CALM DOWN...!
CALM DOWN.
What am I going to do...?! if she...
I can't reach her cell-phone either... that girl has never turned the power off even once...!

But it's not like we *know* something's happened to her.
Right?
Not yet...
Have you contacted the police?
Okay, let's contact the police for now.
Oh, Hori-san—
Good timing.
ガラ

Sorry, but please...
Okay.
Uh—
Huh?
With two... no, *three* sugars, and put a little bit of the rum from the cupboard in there too, please.
Um, sorry, but could you brew up some black tea in the kitchen and bring it to the front desk?

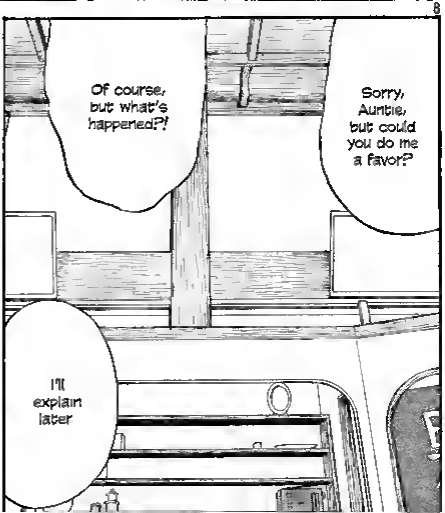
Hmm?
ブロロロ
ブロロ
ザザッ
ザザッ
キィッ
Then we'll discuss the details in the car—
ガラッ


What is going on?
Oh, Auntie

Are you all right, Mina-chan?
Even if it's hard to, you should drink all of it

Um, we'll be right there, so please go ahead
Under-stood.

8


Of course, but what's happened?!
Sorry, Auntie, but could you do me a favor?
I'll explain later

Did something happen? Kana-bou's riding in the patrol car out there.
Hey
I'm not really sure what's going on
Ah, good evening

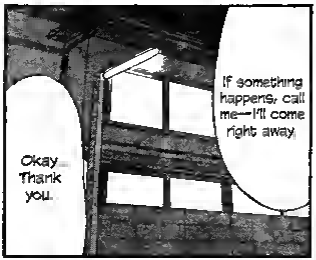
Isn't that Miyu-bou's mom with her?

Today I was supposed to work in the evening, but the store closed early, so I returned to my apartment
Four days out of the week, besides working afternoons I also work evenings, so on those days I leave her money for dinner and a bath

9

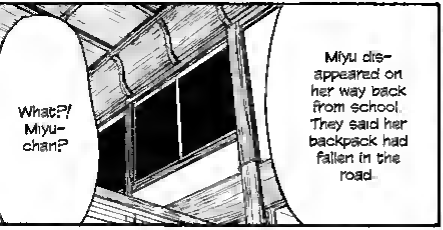
Miyu... Has she been kidnapped...?
We don't know yet.
And she wasn't there. A friend brought her backpack over for her...

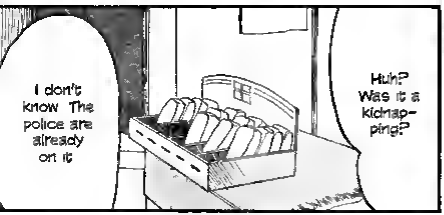
As soon as we find something, we'll contact you.
Okay.
but we're accounting for that possibility and will conduct a search. For the time being, please return to your home.


If something happens, call me—I'll come right away.
Okay. Thank you.

Really? I can stay with you longer.
Kana-chan, it's okay, you can go back to work. I'm all right.

10

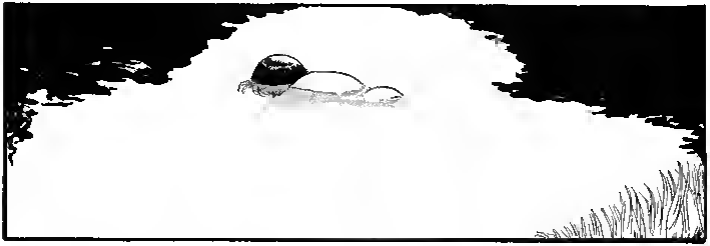

What?! Miyu-chan?
Miyu disappeared on her way back from school. They said her backpack had fallen in the road.


I don't know. The police are already on it.
Huh? Was it a kidnapping?

So what happened?!
ガラ
Sorry, Auntie.

コトッ
Have some
Ah... Thanks
ゴク ゴク ゴク
ゴク…

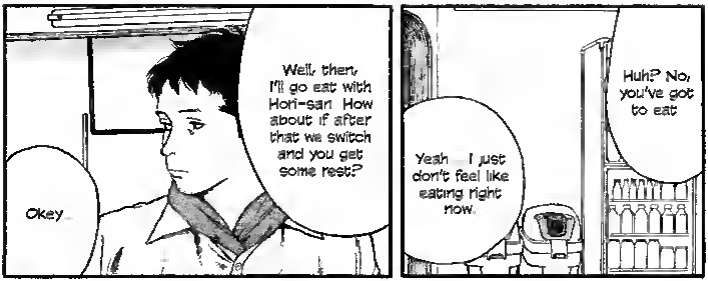
フーッ



12

Oh... Sorry, I don't need any...

Well... You two should go get some food
案内

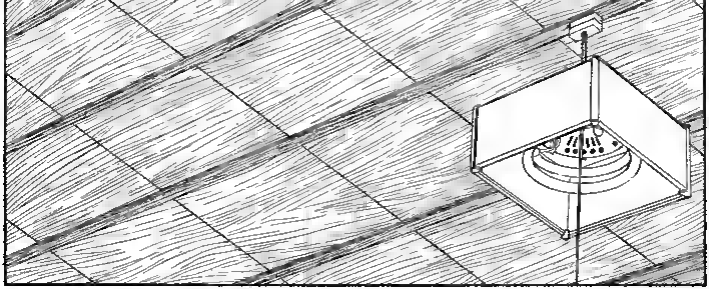

Okey...
Well, then, I'll go eat with Hori-san. How about if after that we switch and you get some rest?
Yeah... I just don't feel like eating right now.
Huh? No, you've got to eat

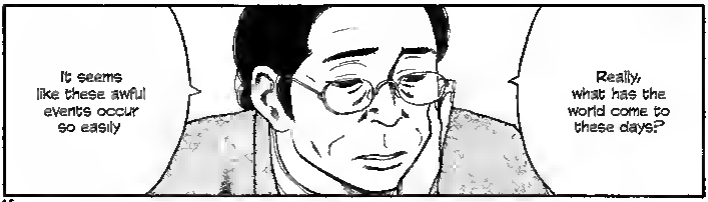
男

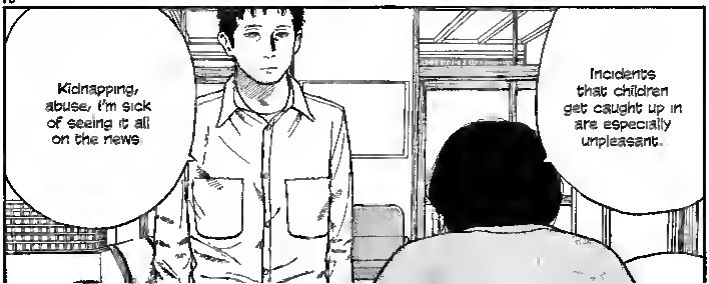
13

ガチャ

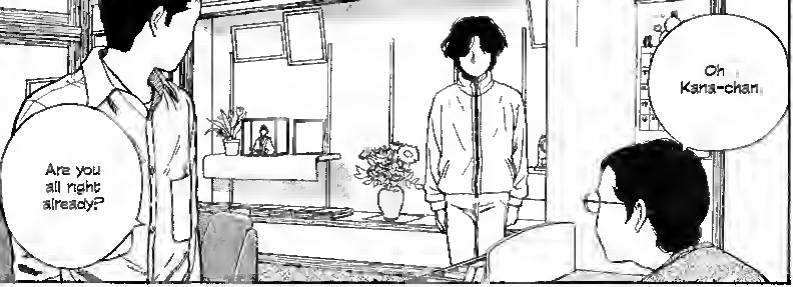
Are you all right?
What are we gonna do?
If something happens to Miyu, what are we going to do?
...If something horrible that can never be undone happens to her, what are we going to do...?!
Ma'am—
If she can't come back alive, what will we do? If she never comes back, what are we going to do?!
Ma'am!
The police are conducting a widespread search as we speak, and, at any rate, we should leave it to them. For now, you shouldn't worry about such unnecessary things.
Please go get some rest.



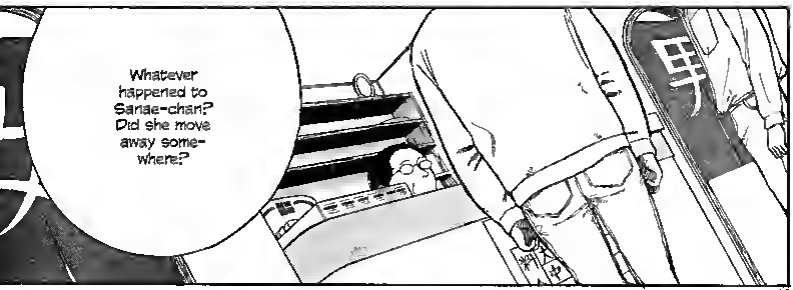

It seems like these awful events occur so easily
Really, what has the world come to these days?


Kidnapping, abuse, I'm sick of seeing it all on the news
Incidents that children get caught up in are especially unpleasant.

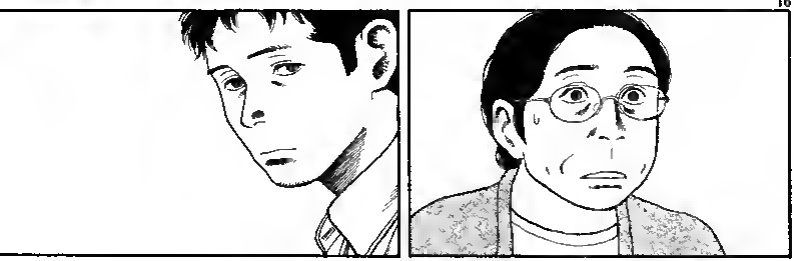
ANZ


Are you all right already?
Oh Kana-chan.

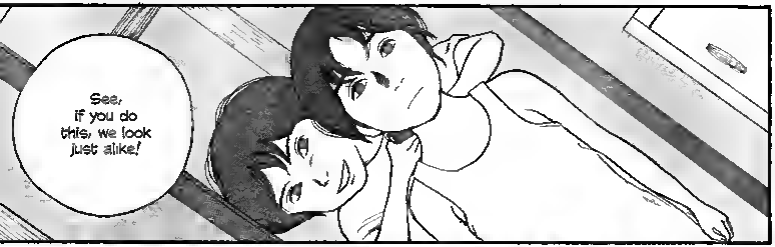
When I was little, wasn't there a Sanae-chan?


Whatever happened to Sanae-chan? Did she move away some-where?

16



Sanae-chan was... I mean... Hey...
...What are you talking about... at a time like this...
I'm going to go back to the boiler room.
Oh. Okay.
It's all down to whether or not that guy's got her cell...
17
Seems that there are some kids who saw Miyu talking to an adult they didn't recognize,
and her cellphone's been shut off too. This might be pretty bad...


See, if you do this, we look just alike!

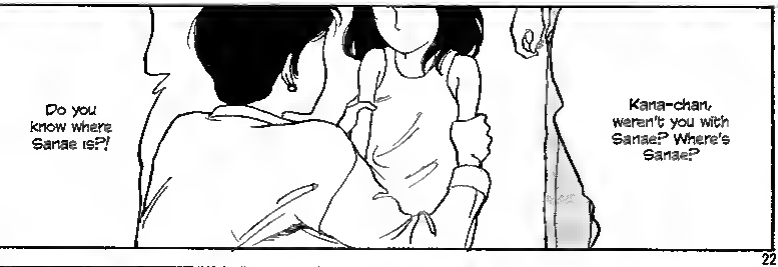
Really?
If we wear matching clothes, they won't know who's who!
It'll be all right! It won't get in the way if it's short, and it'll be cute!
My auntie said I have frizzy hair, so if I get it cut short, it'll go all over the place.

What? Really?
Oh yes, they say he called out to Narusawa-san's Ikumi-chan and ran after her.
Oh, that's right, I heard there was some strange guy prowling around here in his car.
It's 'cause the school is right around here.
It happens a lot, this type of thing.
19

The girl is Fujikawa Miyu, 8 years old. I repeat—
The suspect has been apprehended. The girl in the car with him is unharmed and in our custody.
20

HELP!
SOMEBODY! ANYBODY!
'CAUSE IF YOU DO, I'LL KILL YOU!
YOU BETTER NOT TELL ANYONE!

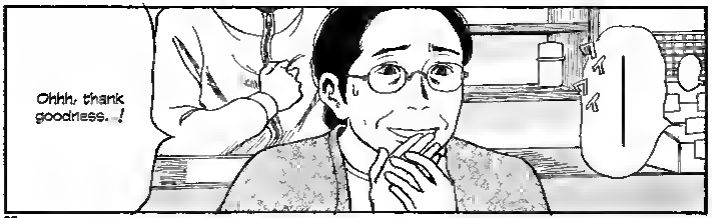
AND I'LL ALWAYS BE WATCHING YOU!!


Kana-chan, weren't you with Sanae? Where's Sanae?
Do you know where Sanae is?!

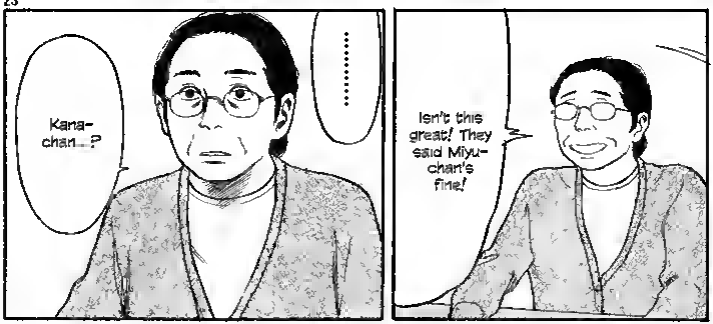
I don't know.

THEY GOT HIM!
AND MIYU-CHAN IS SAFE!

REAL-LY?!
REALLY! REALLY! I JUST HEARD IT OVER THERE!


Ohhh, thank goodness...!

23


Kana-chan...?
Isn't this great! They said Miyu-chan's fine!

Kanae-san can do anything by herself, can't she?

That's wrong

Kana-chan is really bright and energetic, isn't she?

You're wrong

Sanae-chan, who was bright and energetic, loved by adults, and looked good with short hair

I should have died

I should have died.

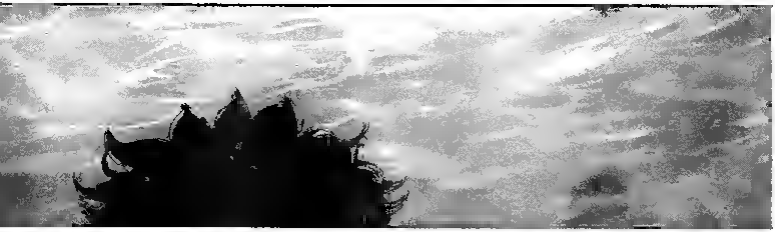
Sanae-chan, who had a kind mother and father, and a brother who would always play with her...

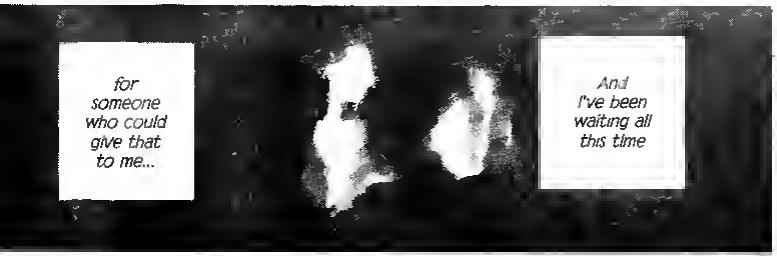
I shouldn't have gotten married... I shouldn't have inherited the bath house

I wanted to die Ever since that day.

Unable to even die.

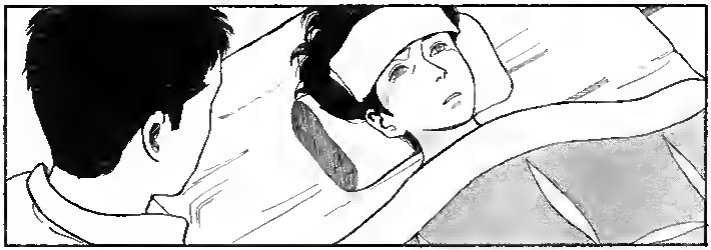
for so long now. I've been living in Sanae's place

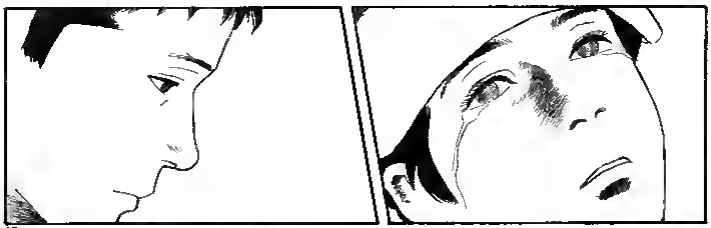




All this time...

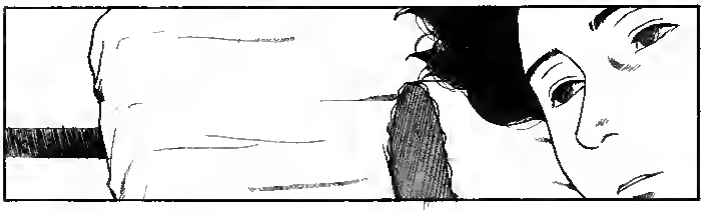
STAFF

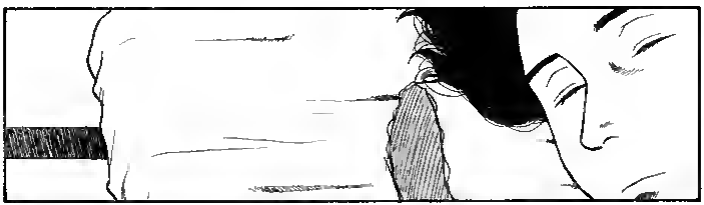




27

Kill me...
Please ..





UNDERCURRENT
c.9
end
Kanae's will to live has been broken. She's unable to have even her daily life.
It's caught her. As if she's being forced to chase after a childhood friend the knowledge
sin drags Kanae into the depths.

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

NCIS

UNDERCURRENT

C. 9

#NCIS@irc.irchighway.net

Two more chapters left. Thank your lucky stars that Laika translated this for the rest of us!

Now recruiting
J>E translators and *experienced editors* willing to work on both shonjo/josei and seinen

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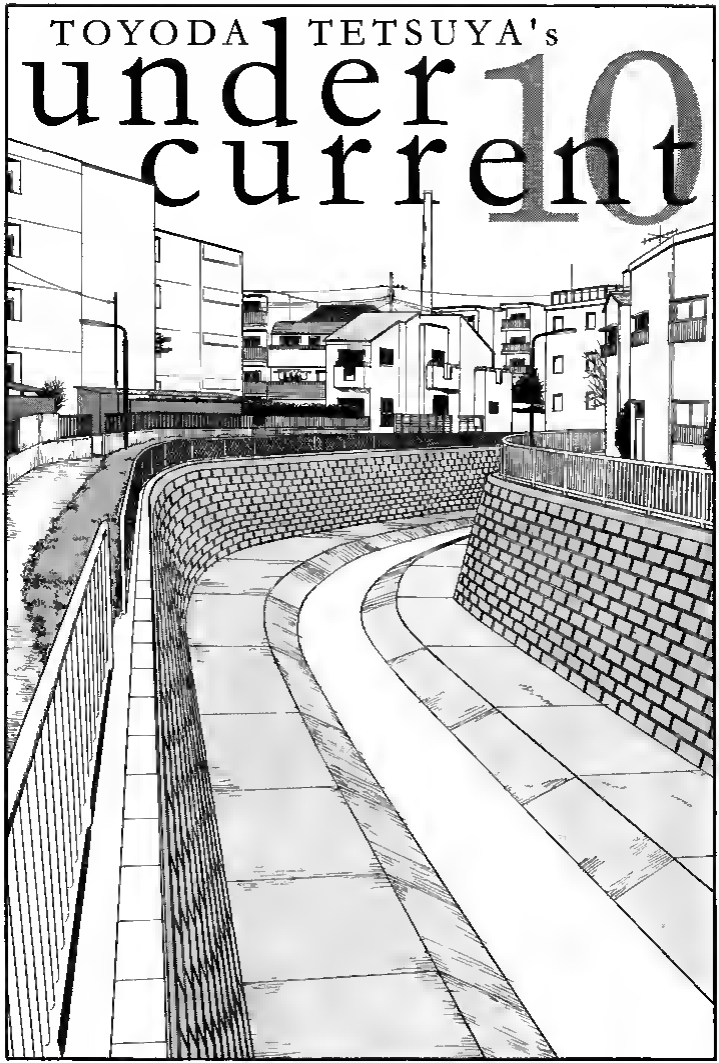
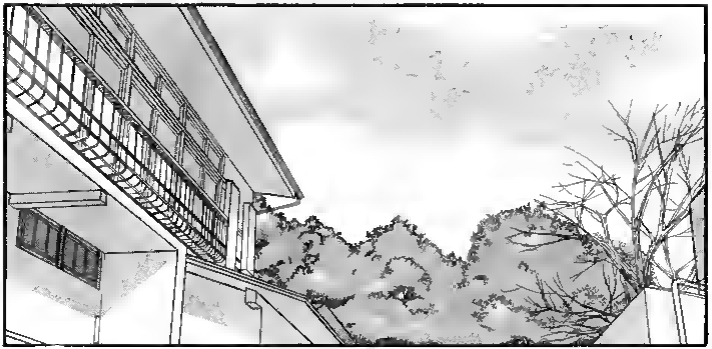
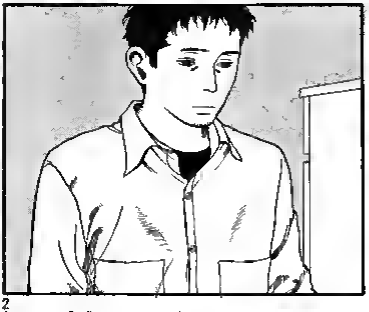
TOYODA TETSUYA's

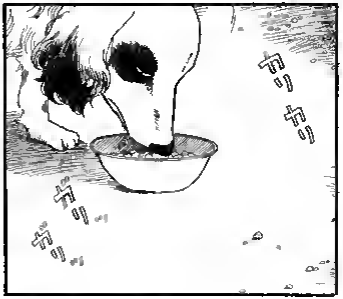
under current 10



Synchronicity All events are connected







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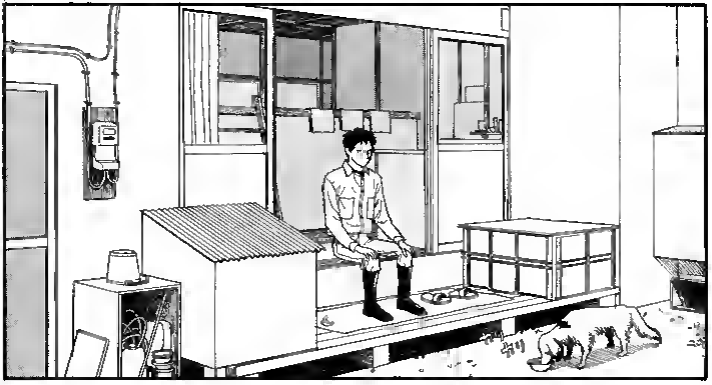

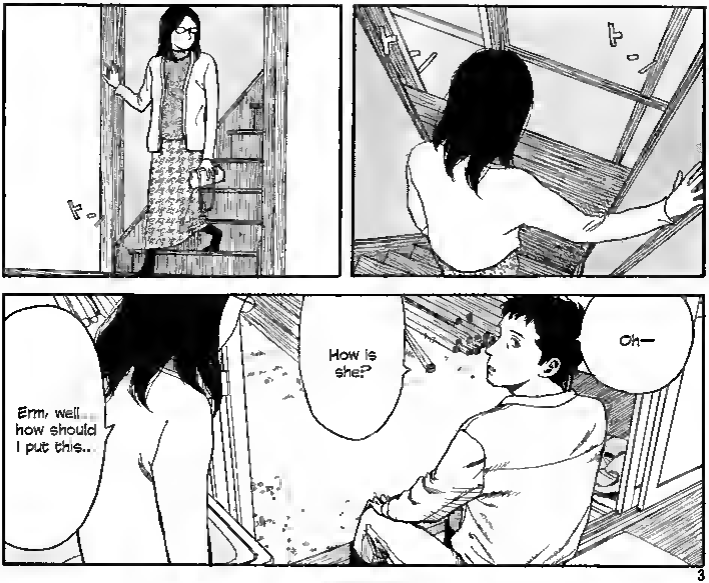
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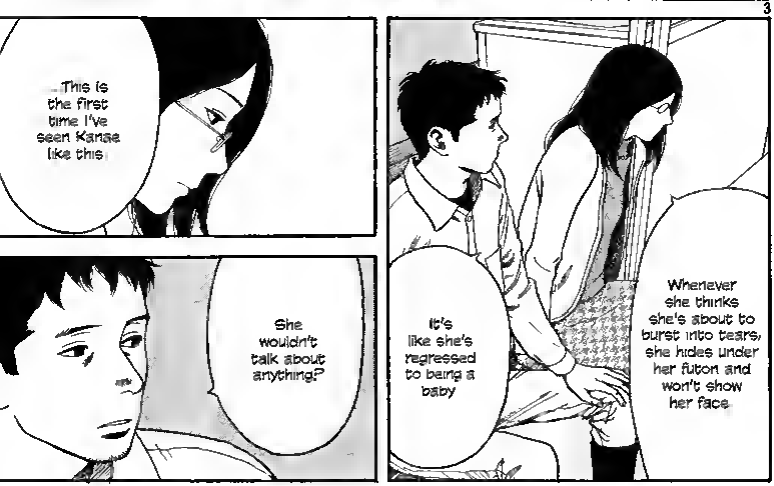
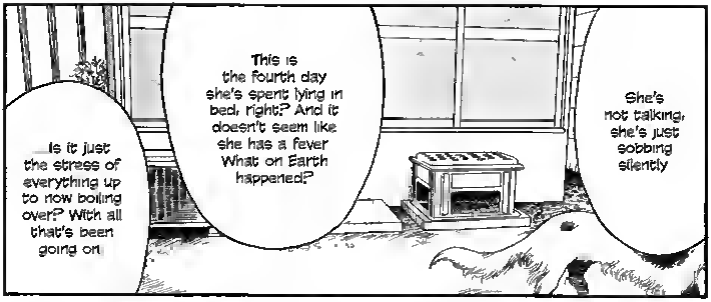
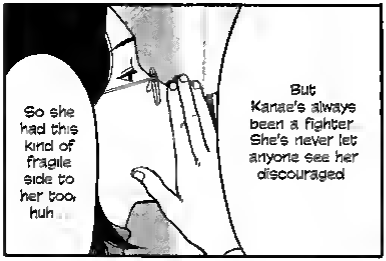
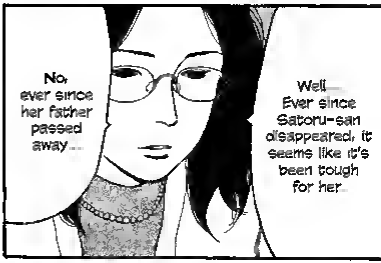
Oh—
How is she?
Erm, well... how should I put this...

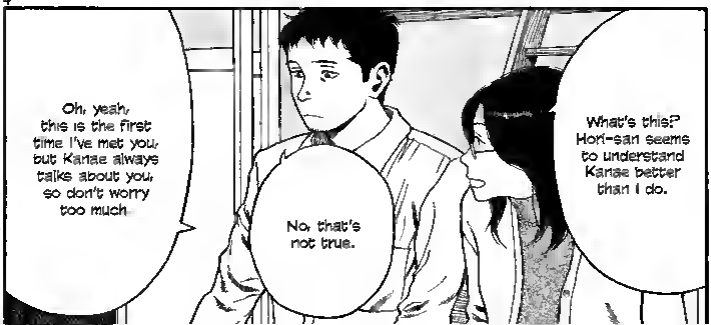

...This is the first time I've seen Kanae like this
She wouldn't talk about anything?
It's like she's regressed to being a baby
Whenever she thinks she's about to burst into tears, she hides under her futon and won't show her face


Is it just the stress of everything up to now boiling over? With all that's been going on
This is the fourth day she's spent lying in bed, right? And it doesn't seem like she has a fever What on Earth happened?
She's not talking, she's just sobbing silently

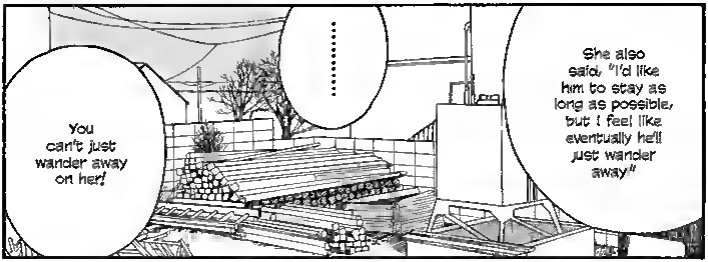

So she had this kind of fragile side to her too, huh...
But Kanae's always been a fighter She's never let anyone see her discouraged

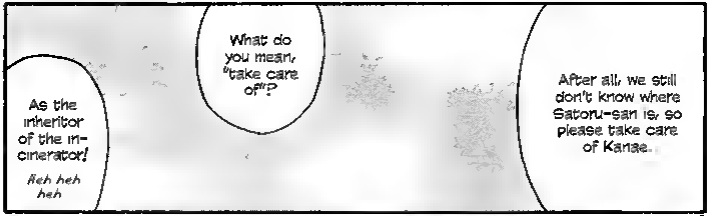

No, ever since her father passed away...
Well... Ever since Satoru-san disappeared, it seems like it's been tough for her

Perhaps she could never show weakness because of what the people around her expected from her and because of the roles she had to play
I think that she's a strong person, but that maybe she just thought she couldn't ever show that side of herself

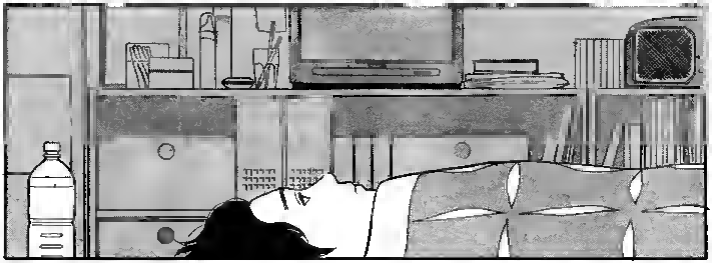

Oh, yeah, this is the first time I've met you, but Kanae always talks about you, so don't worry too much
No, that's not true.
What's this? Hori-san seems to understand Kanae better than I do.

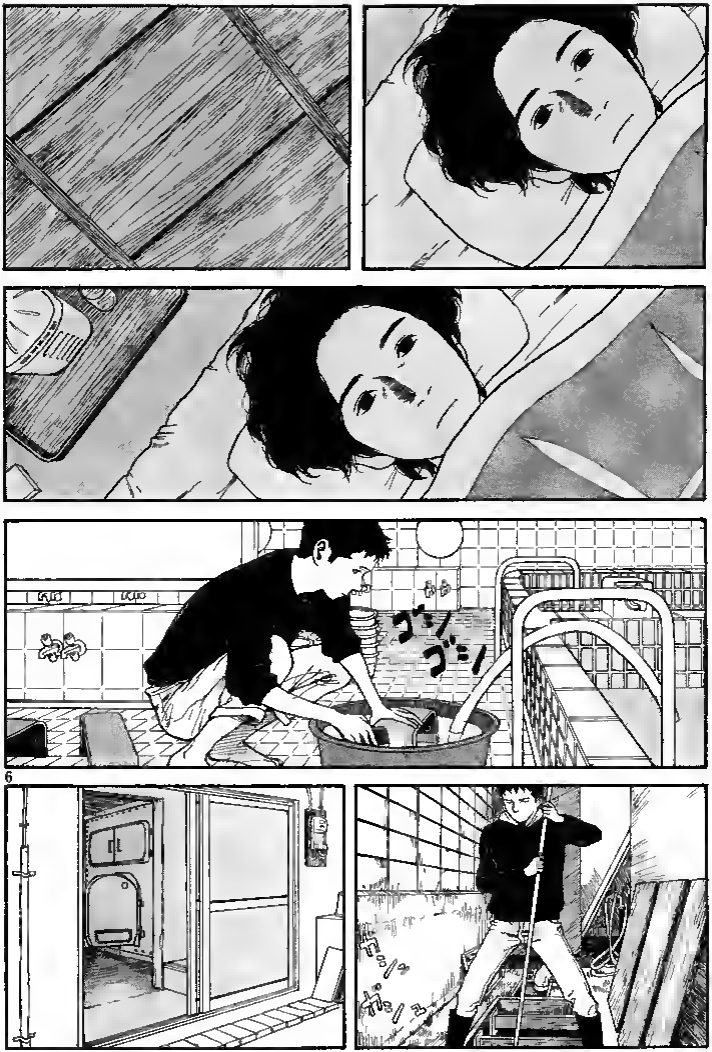
You know, Kanae did say that you were a really strange guy
That I was?
Yup — She didn't say it in a bad way, though


She also said, "I'd like him to stay as long as possible, but I feel like eventually he'll just wander away."
.....
You can't just wander away on her!


After all, we still don't know where Satoru-san is, so please take care of Kanae.
What do you mean, "take care of"?
As the inheritor of the incinerator!
Heh heh heh

5

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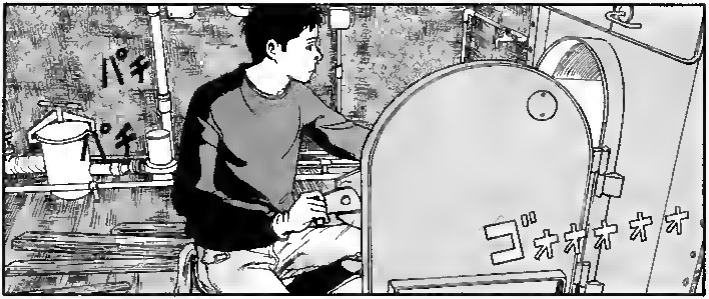

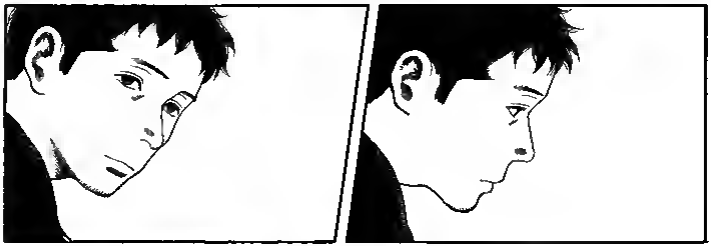

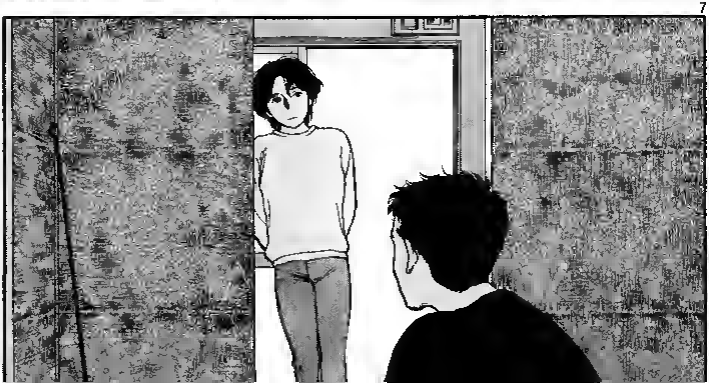

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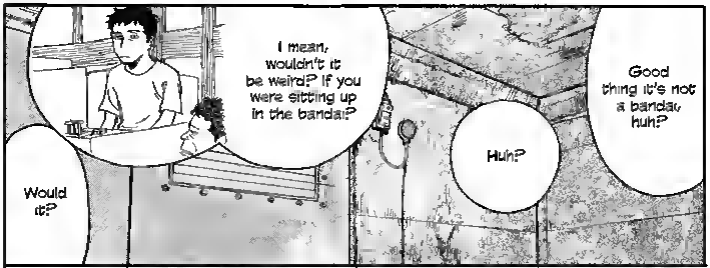
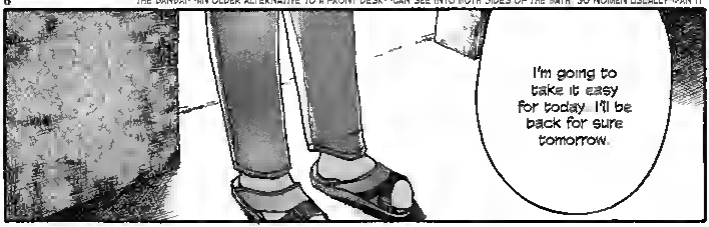
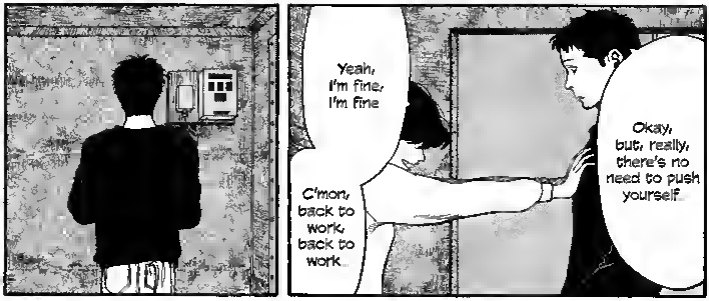


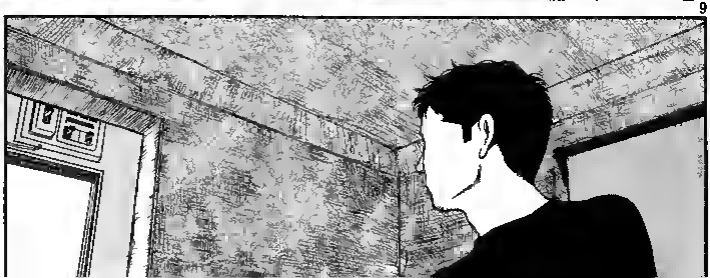
8 THE BANDAI—AN OLDER ALTERNATIVE TO A FRONT DESK—CAN SEE INTO BOTH SIDES OF THE BATH, SO WOMEN USUALLY MAN IT

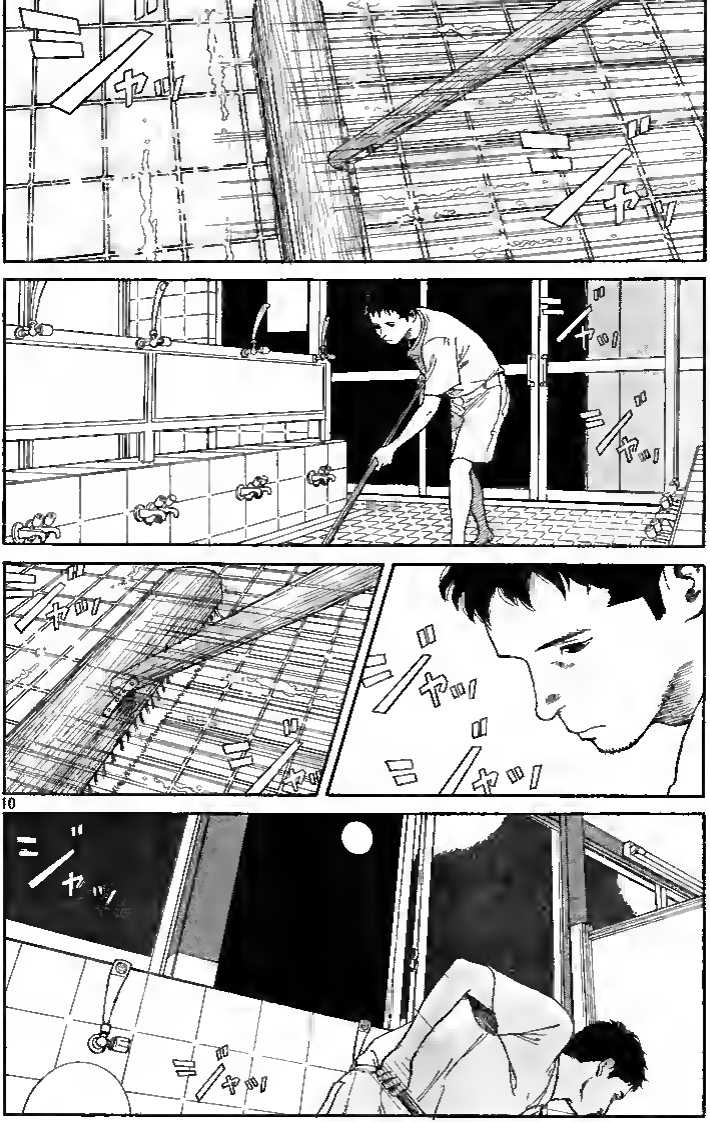



Yeah, I'm fine, I'm fine
C'mon, back to work, back to work...
Okay, but, really, there's no need to push yourself...

Hori-san?

Sorry...

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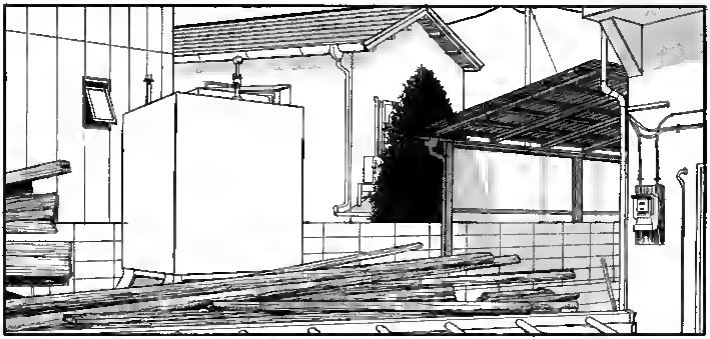
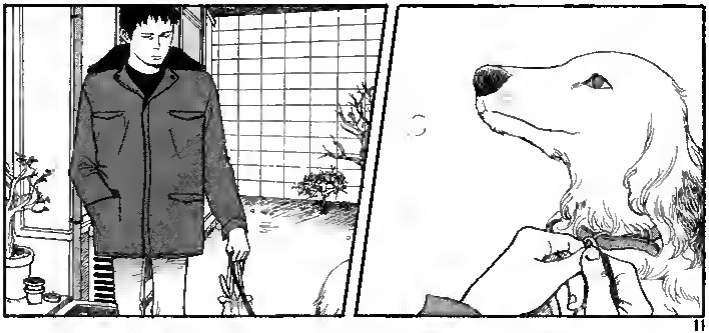
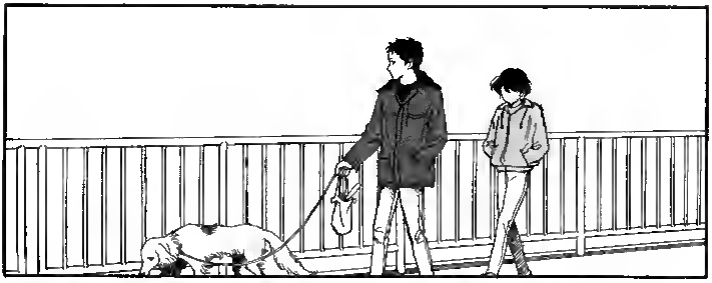
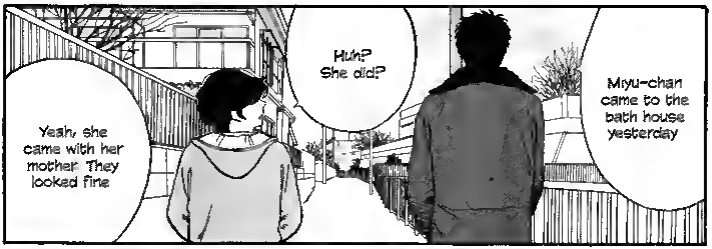
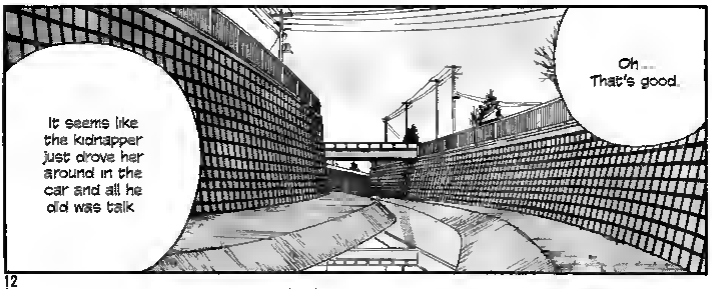




I'll go with you
Hori-san,

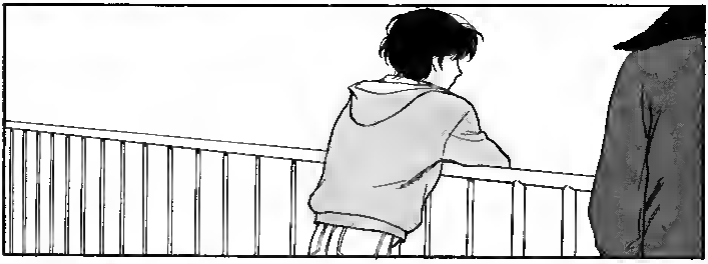


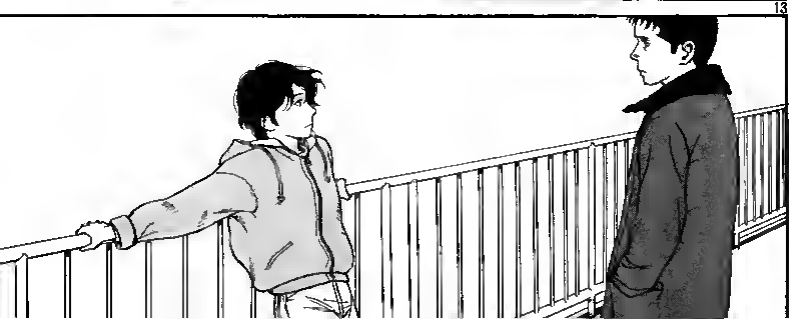

Miyu-chan came to the bath house yesterday
Huh? She did?
Yeah, she came with her mother. They looked fine


Oh... That's good.
It seems like the kidnapper just drove her around in the car and all he did was talk

12

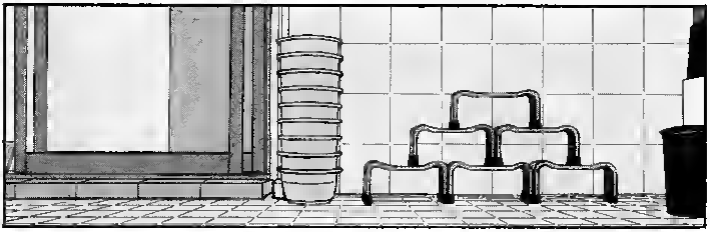
It's really already winter, huh.
Nice weather

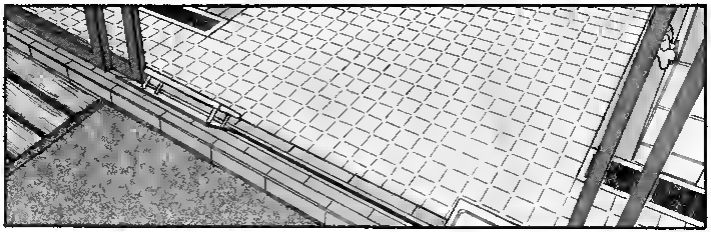




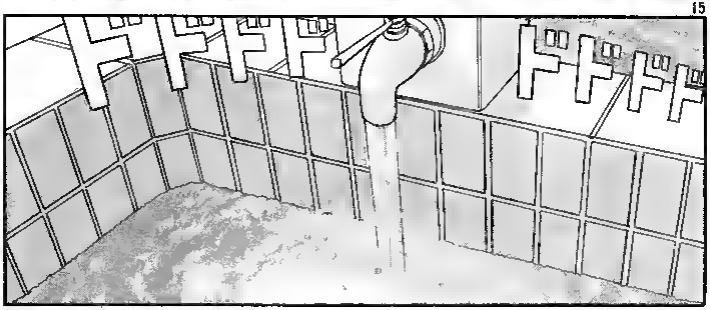
Hori-san, why do you sometimes look at me so nostalgically?
...I don't
It's just your imagination

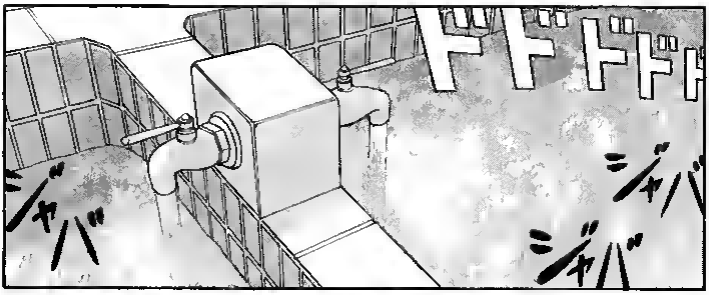
When you leave here, don't leave without saying anything...
Hori-san, I want you to promise me one thing





15

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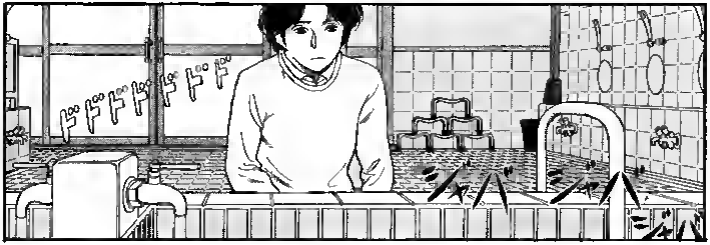
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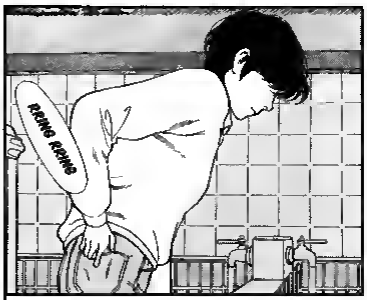
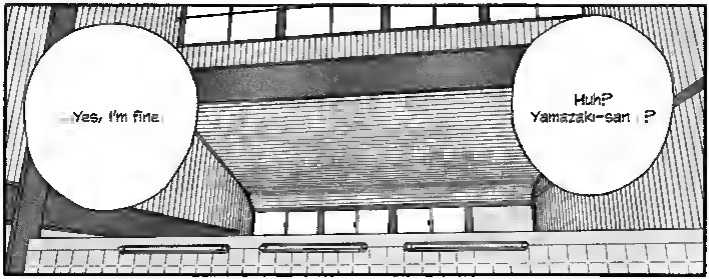
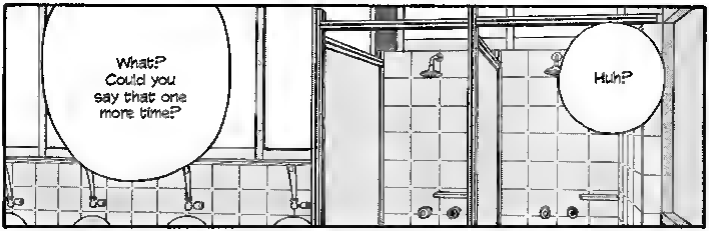
RRING RRING RRING
RRING RRING RRING

16

Yes, hello.

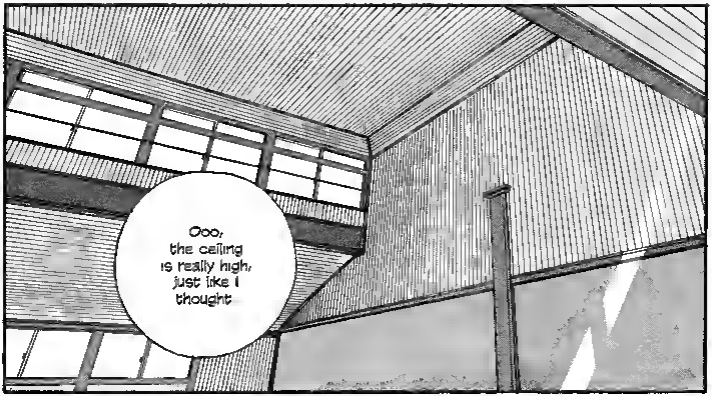

RRING RRING

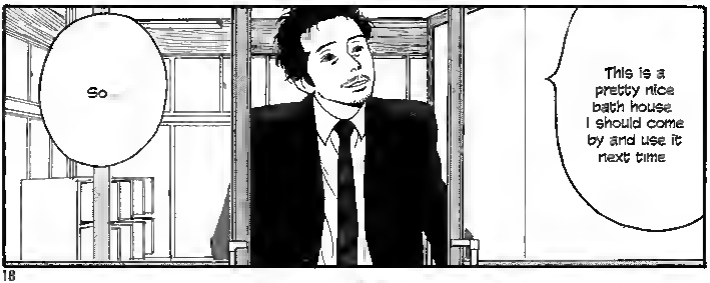

...Yes, I'm fine.
Huh? Yamazaki-san!?


What? Could you say that one more time?
Huh?

You found him...?

©CLAMP


Ooo,
the ceiling
is really high,
just like I
thought

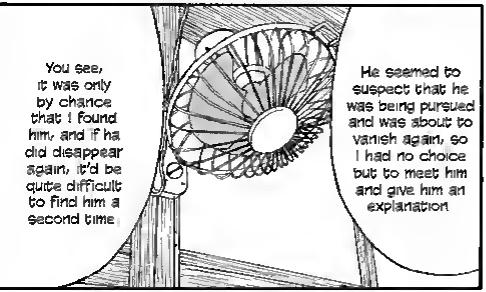

So
This is a
pretty nice
bath house
I should come
by and use it
next time

18

Hold your
horses

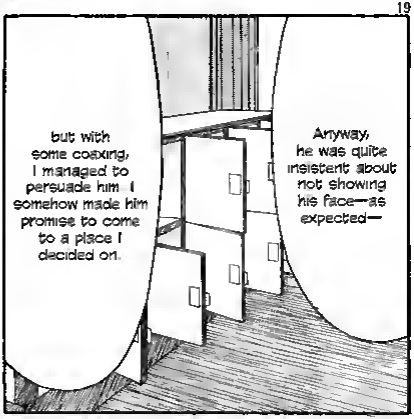
Where
is he—
Satoru-
san?

Also, it doesn't seem like he has any intention of staying around
What are you—
Let's get this out of the way first; you are no longer my employer, and, therefore, I'm under no obligation to answer you.
You met with him?!

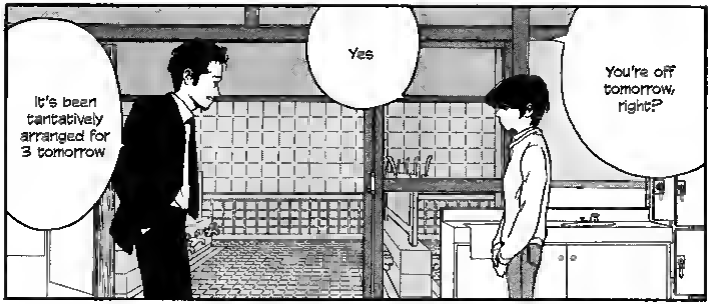

You see, it was only by chance that I found him, and if he did disappear again, it'd be quite difficult to find him a second time.
He seemed to suspect that he was being pursued and was about to vanish again, so I had no choice but to meet him and give him an explanation.

Yes, I've met him

So, Kanae-san, what will you do?


but with some coaxing, I managed to persuade him. I somehow made him promise to come to a place I decided on.
Anyway, he was quite insistent about not showing his face—as expected—

Will you meet with him...?
What will you do... Please decide for yourself.
.....
...I'll meet with him.
Understood.


It's been tentatively arranged for 3 tomorrow
Yes
You're off tomorrow, right?

Until tomorrow, then.
And one more thing wear something warm, because it might be cold.
...Okay
It's a little far away, so if it's all right with you, I'll come by to take you there at 1 tomorrow.

Yes?
Um...

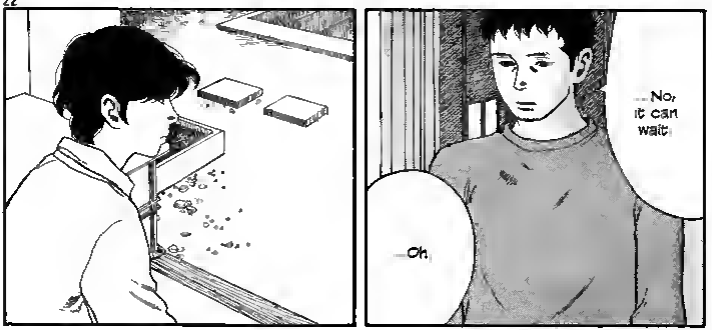
...It would be better for you to see that for yourself
Did he... look like he was all right?

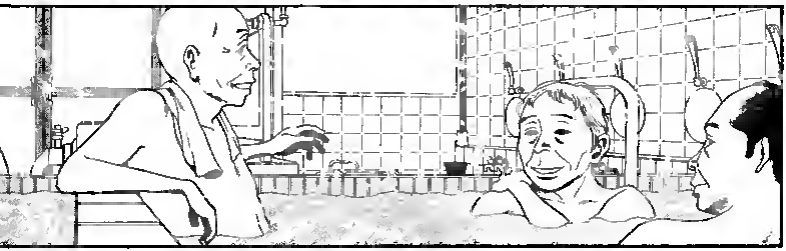
Ma'am, um...
Ma'am?

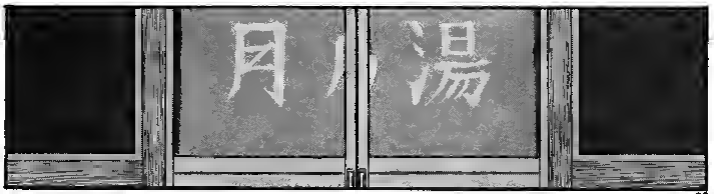
Huh?

Did you say something?
What is it?

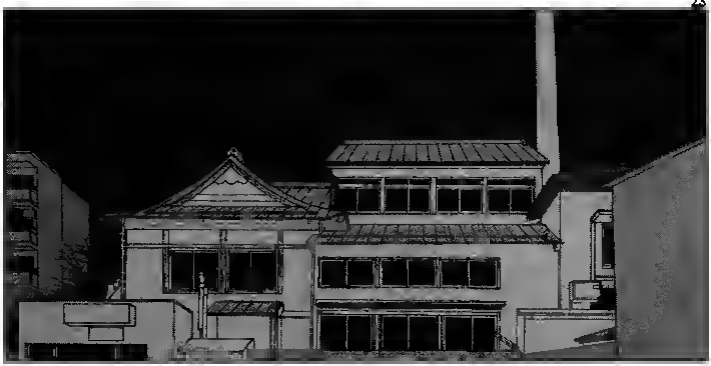
22


...No, it can wait.
...Oh.

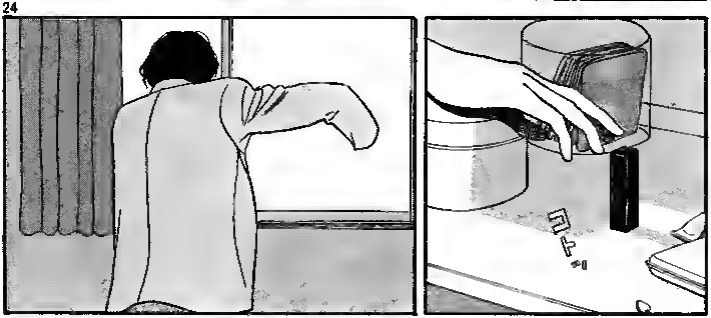


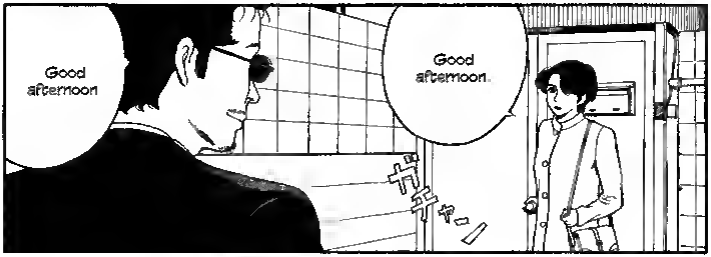


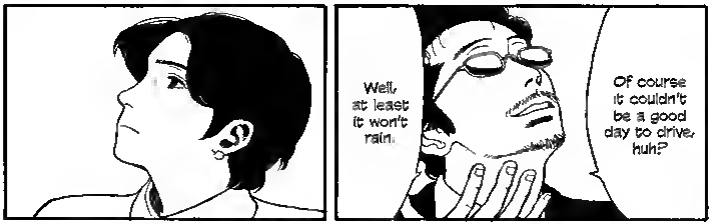
23



24




Good afternoon.
Good afternoon


Of course it couldn't be a good day to drive, huh?
Well, at least it won't rain.

Please, get in

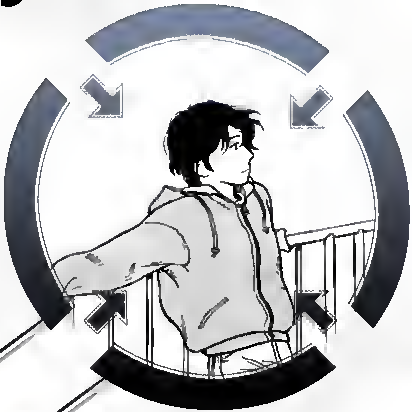
Guess I'm just here for the ride... Maybe I just want to see what's under the veil
...I wonder
Why have you gone out of your way to do this?
Yamazaki-san, this isn't work anymore, is it?
バターン
バターン
ブォォ
26
ブロロロ…

UNDERCURRENT c.10 end

The car the detective drives heads out towards the final chapter. Don't miss next time, the truth becomes clear

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!

NCIS



UNDERCURRENT

C. 10

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Now recruiting
J>E translators and *experienced editors* willing to work on both shoujo/josei and seinen
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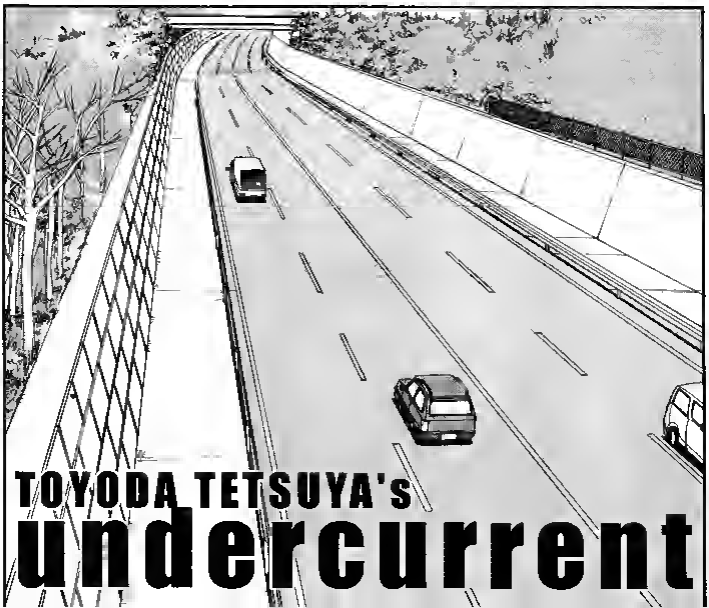
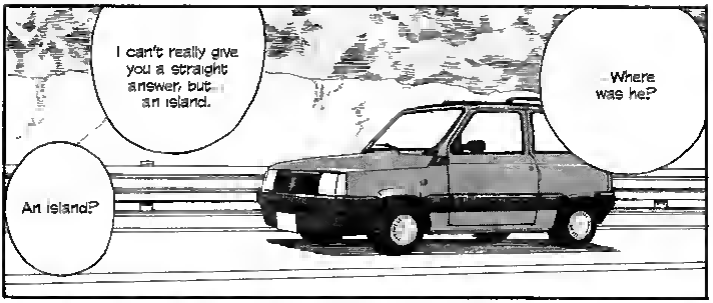
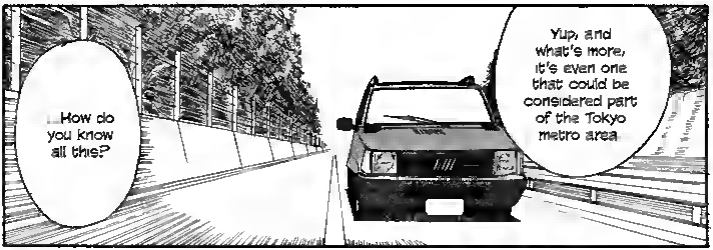
Heading towards the truth, passing through the days with the people most important to us, we reach the conclusion

Chapter the Last



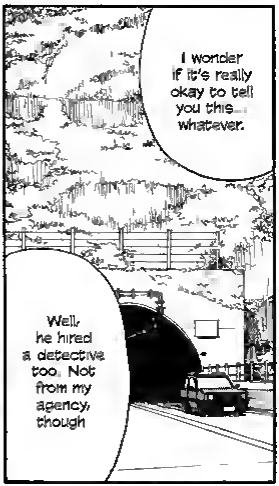
TOYODA TETSUYA'S undercurrent


I can't really give you a straight answer, but... an island.
Where was he?
An island?

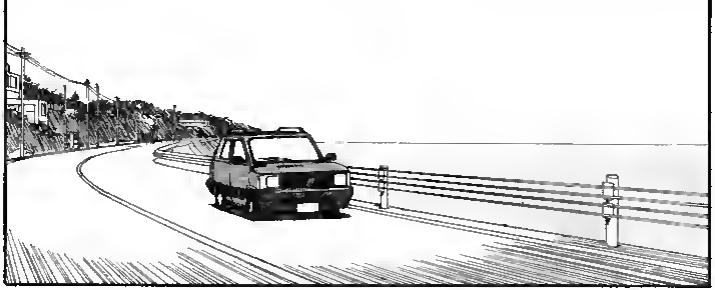

Yup, and what's more, it's even one that could be considered part of the Tokyo metro area.
How do you know all this?

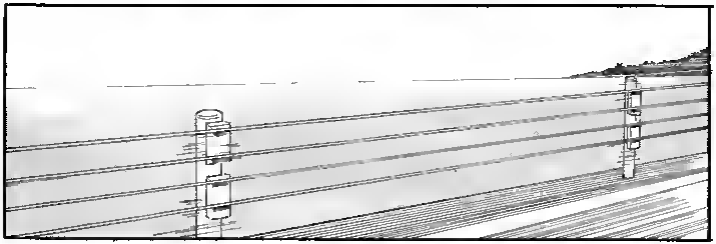
2

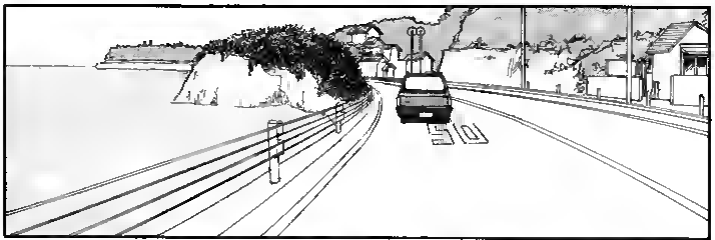
Huh?!
He must have been worried about what'd happen to you after he disappeared.
Didn't you notice the guy always loitering nearby?


I wonder if it's really okay to tell you this... whatever.
Well, he hired a detective too. Not from my agency, though.

And, just as I suspected, he was tailing you. After we parted I caught up to him, and, sure enough, he was in the same business
We met at an amusement park before, right? I noticed someone weird there, so I had you walk around a bit.
No, never...
When I reveal all my secrets it's really not that impressive, is it?
I asked him who hired him, and... normally you wouldn't give it out, but, well, I have my ways and worked my magic and was able to find out anyhow.
...Are you angry?
3
...I sympathize with you.







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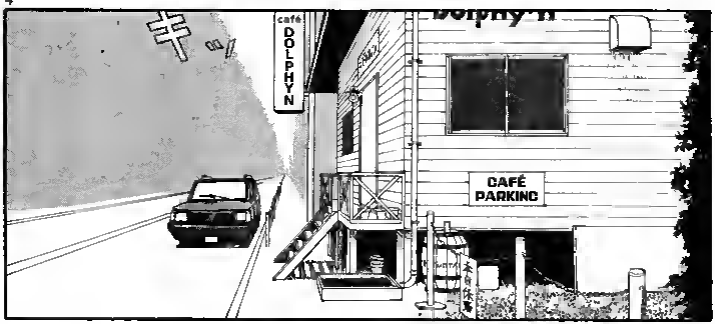
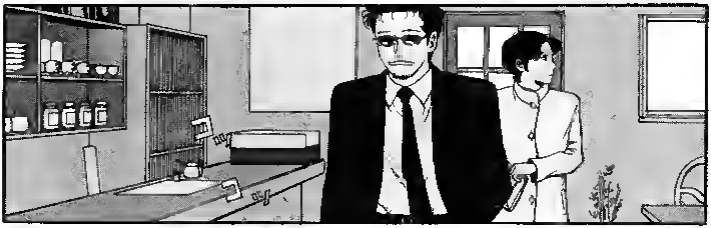
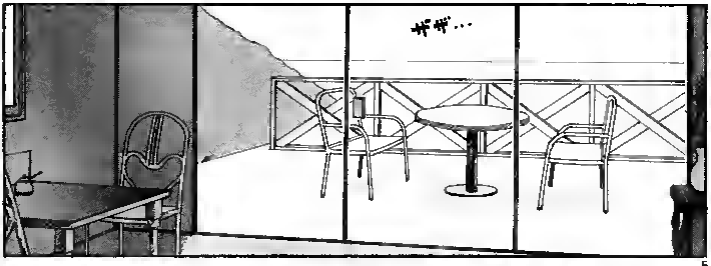


"on break today"

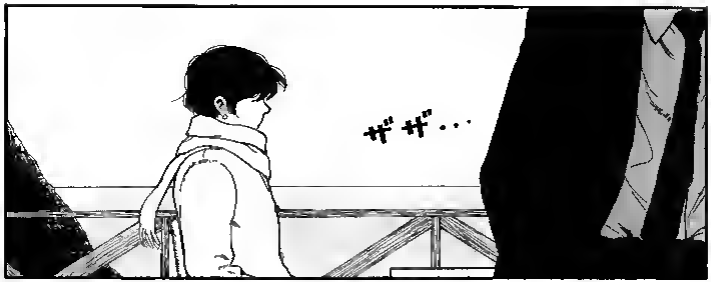
This is a shop that an acquaintance of mine runs. They're on holiday so I'm just borrowing it for a bit
ガチャガチャ

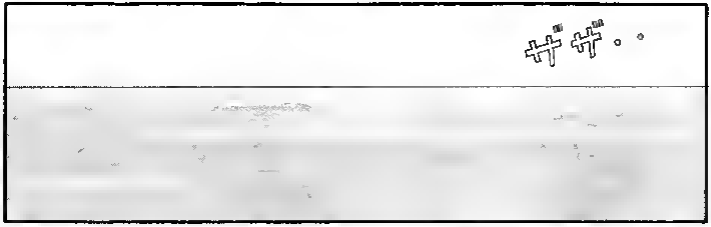



ザザ…

5

Would you like some coffee?
Please.
Wait here, please.



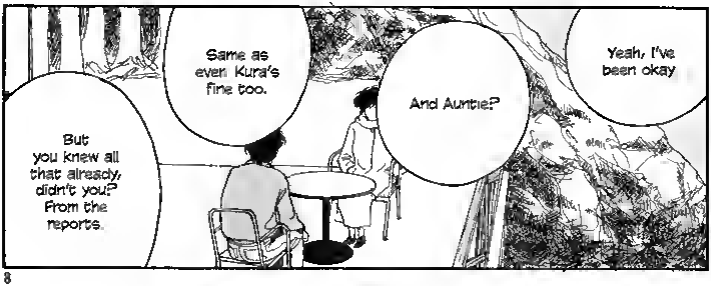


6

ガタ
Your beard, too
Yeah
Your hair grew out.

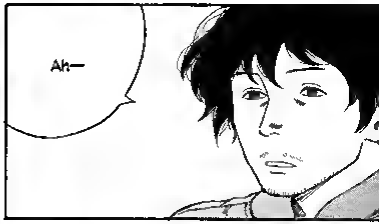
You've been all right?

Seems like everybody's been growing beards lately


But you knew all that already, didn't you? From the reports.
Same as ever. Kura's fine too.
And Auntie?
Yeah, I've been okay

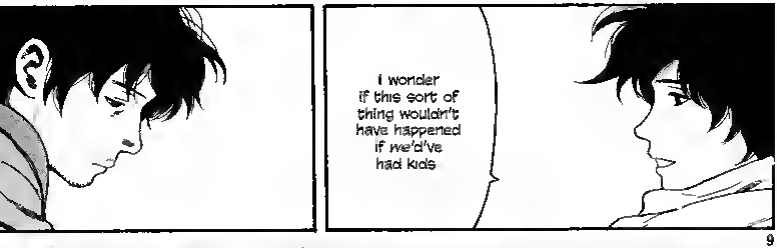
8

Ah, sorry for the wait. This is our special house blend.


Ah—

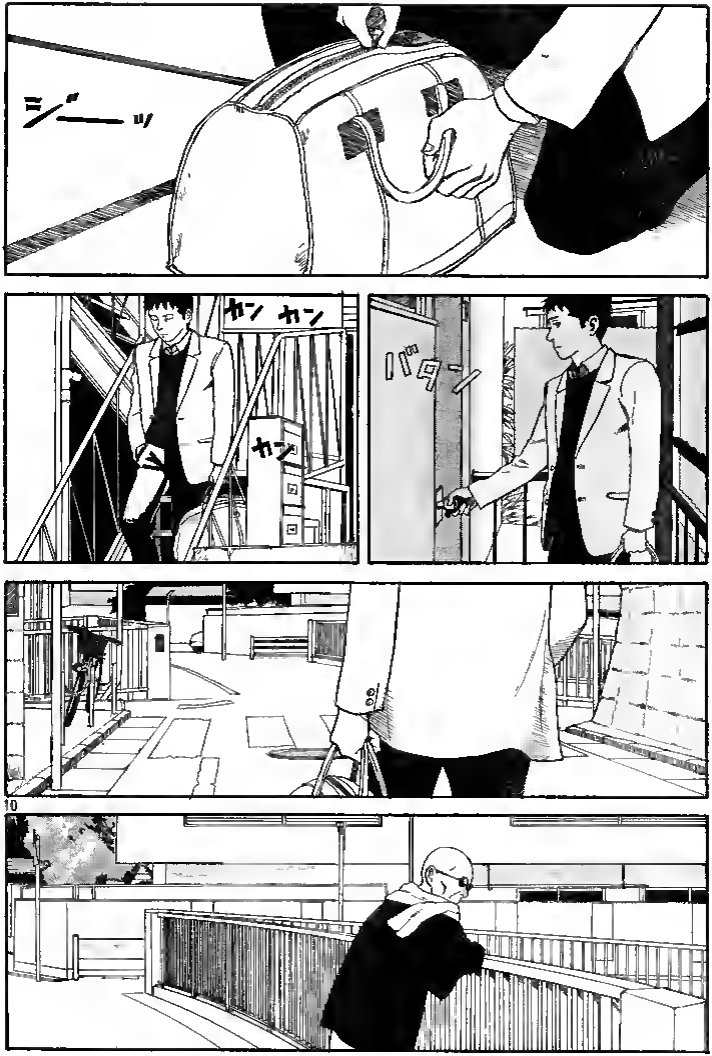
Please enjoy

Is that weird detective one you hired?
Yup, well, that's just how things turned out. Kanno recommended him.
Ah, and is Youko-chan well?
She is. She's got a kid who's about to turn 1.


I wonder if this sort of thing wouldn't have happened if we'd've had kids

9

Why did you leave without saying anything?

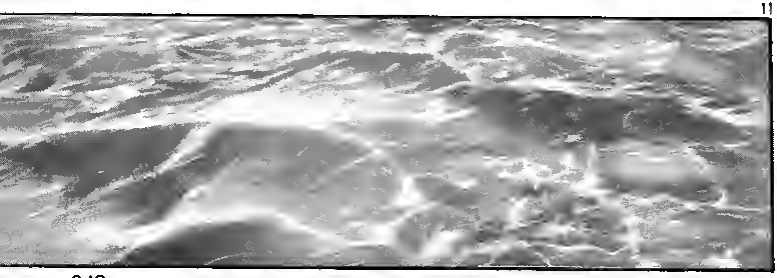

ミ〜ッ
カン カン
カン
バタン

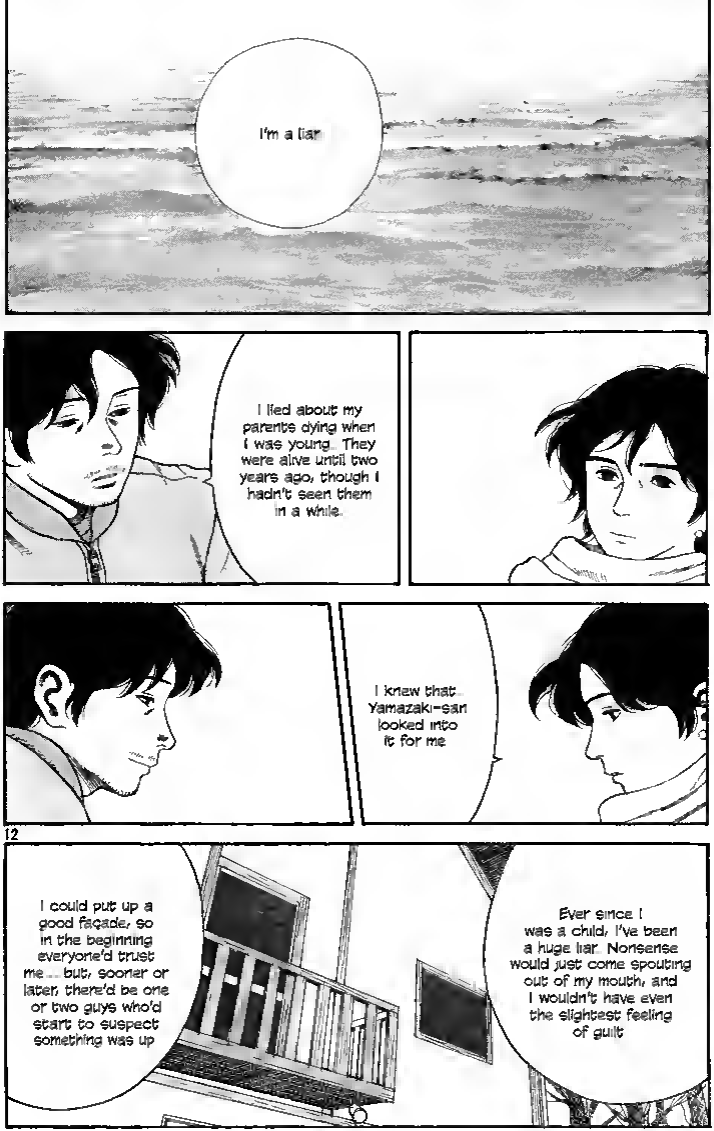
Oh, are you going out for a while?

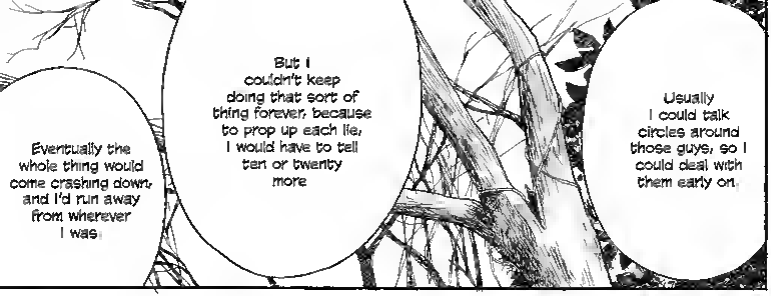
Or are you setting off on a journey...

Whichever it is, shall I see you off this once?

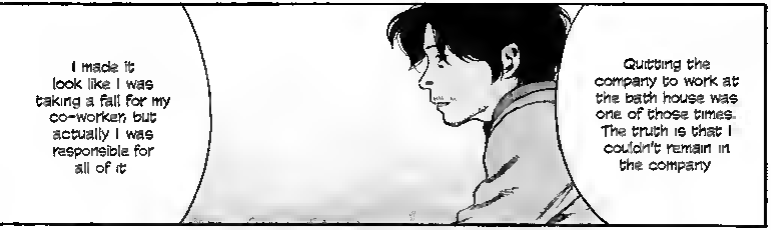
11



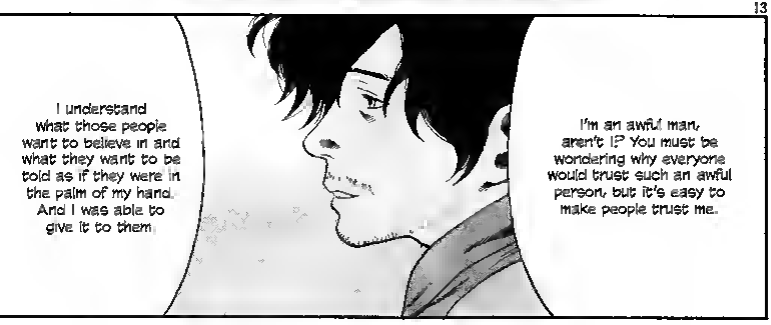

I'm a liar.
I lied about my parents dying when I was young. They were alive until two years ago, though I hadn't seen them in a while.
I knew that Yamazaki-san looked into it for me
I could put up a good façade, so in the beginning everyone'd trust me... but, sooner or later, there'd be one or two guys who'd start to suspect something was up
Ever since I was a child, I've been a huge liar. Nonsense would just come spouting out of my mouth, and I wouldn't have even the slightest feeling of guilt


Usually I could talk circles around those guys, so I could deal with them early on.
But I couldn't keep doing that sort of thing forever, because to prop up each lie, I would have to tell ten or twenty more
Eventually the whole thing would come crashing down, and I'd run away from wherever I was.

It's happened again and again and again.

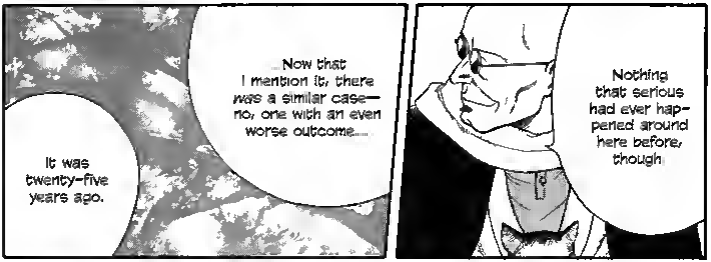

Quitting the company to work at the bath house was one of those times. The truth is that I couldn't remain in the company
I made it look like I was taking a fall for my co-worker, but actually I was responsible for all of it

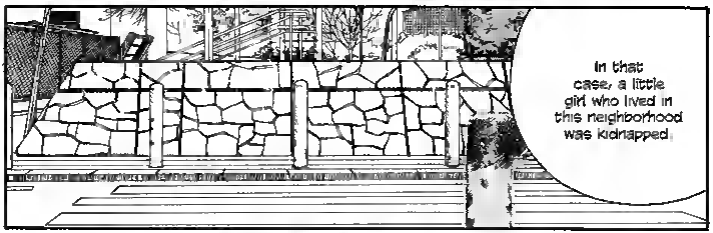
13


I'm an awful man, aren't I? You must be wondering why everyone would trust such an awful person, but it's easy to make people trust me.
I understand what those people want to believe in and what they want to be told as if they were in the palm of my hand. And I was able to give it to them.

People prefer pleasant lies to the truth.
Nobody wants to know anything like the truth. They all want to be deceived.
Did you think that way about me, too?
Was getting married to me just so you could deceive people about the lies you told at the company?
.....
Was everything you told me, everything we talked about, from beginning to end, a lie?

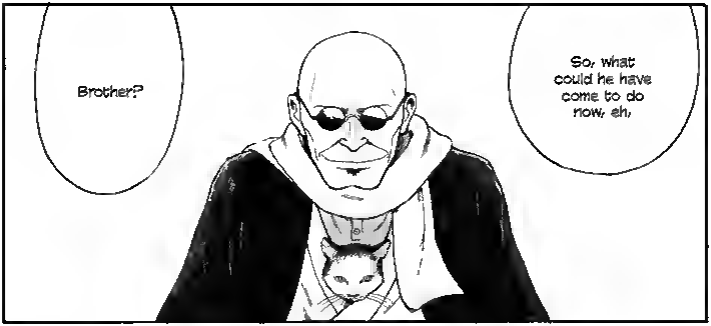
It really has become a tough time for kids to be alive, these last few years.
It's a good thing that Kiddo made it through her kidnapping safely.

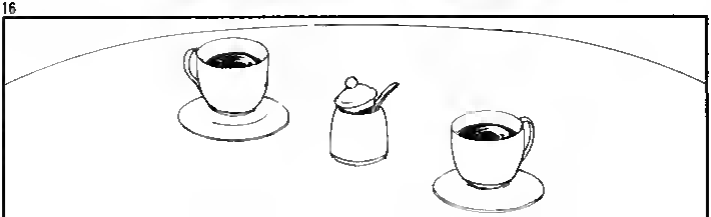

It was twenty-five years ago.
...Now that I mention it, there *was* a similar case—no, one with an even worse outcome...
Nothing that serious had ever happened around here before, though.


In that case, a little girl who lived in this neighborhood was kidnapped.

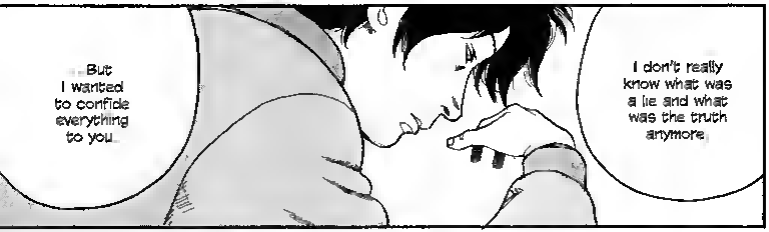
The pond's been filled up and it's since become a multi-unit apartment complex, but...
It was a real tragedy. She was strangled and her drowned body was discovered in a pond a ways away from here.

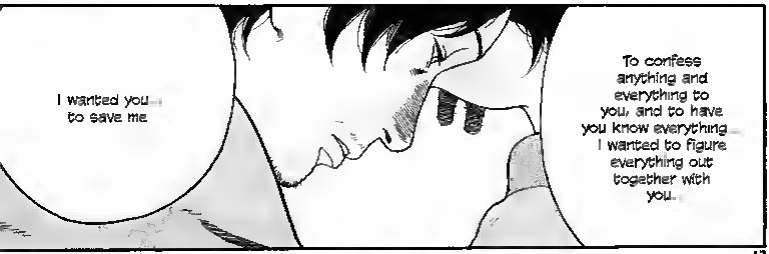
The criminal was never caught, and the girl's family moved off somewhere
This was all years ago.
That girl had a brother who was five years older. At the time, he was a grade schooler
If he were alive, he'd be around 35 or 36...


Brother?
So, what could he have come to do now, eh,

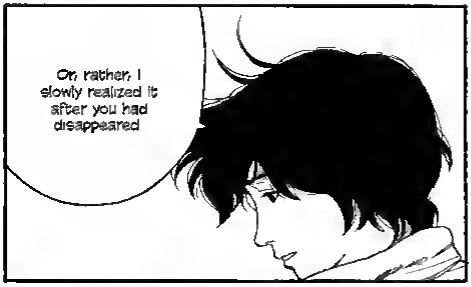


If a liar said, "that was a lie", would it be true?
Or would it be a lie?

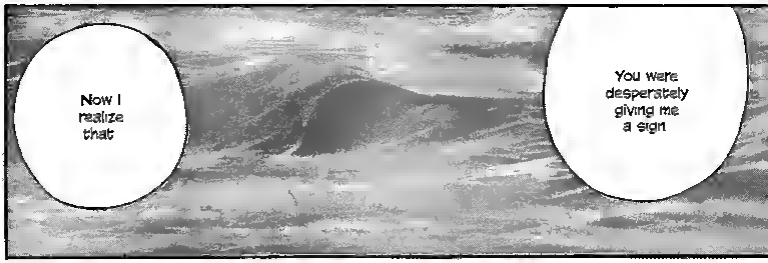

I don't really know what was a lie and what was the truth anymore.
...But I wanted to confide everything to you...


To confess anything and everything to you, and to have you know everything... I wanted to figure everything out together with you...
I wanted you... to save me

But no matter what, I couldn't do it. No matter how many times I tried to tell you,
Whenever it got close to the truth, I got scared and couldn't say anything.


Or, rather, I slowly realized it after you had disappeared

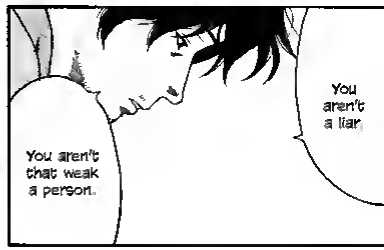
...I knew that you were suffering.


Now I realize that
You were desperately giving me a sign

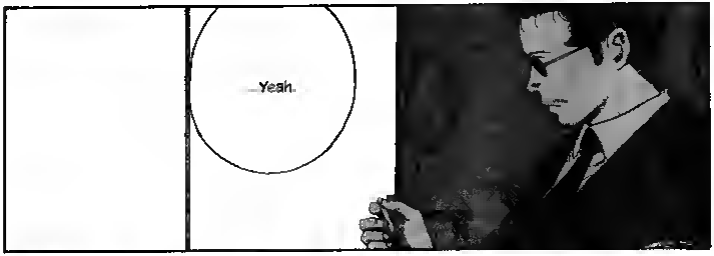
...I mean, I don't even really know my own actual self.
But perhaps I didn't notice it before because I wasn't trying to see your actual self.

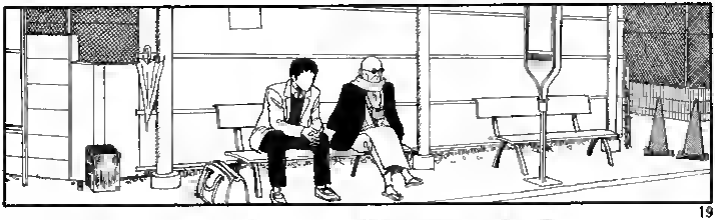
18

No,
I'm not strong or anything. I *am* a weak person.


You aren't a liar.
You aren't that weak a person.

We both might never have understood anything about each other at all.


...Yeah.



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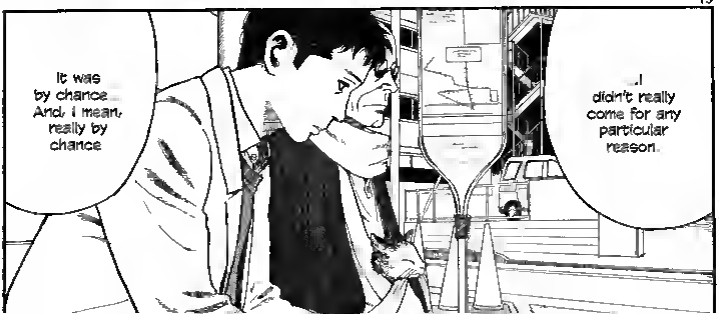
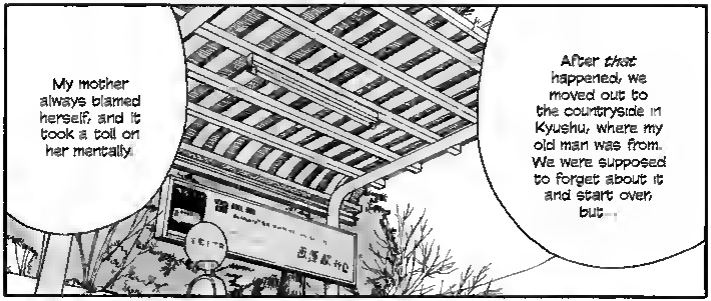
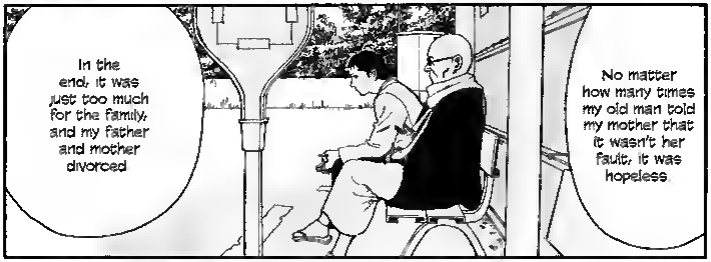
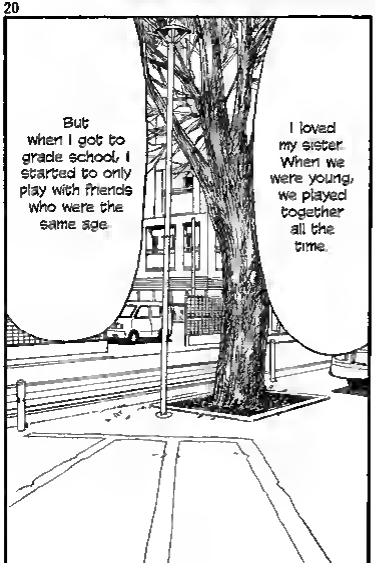

It was by chance... And, I mean, really by chance.
...I didn't really come for any particular reason.


My mother always blamed herself, and it took a toll on her mentally.
After *that* happened, we moved out to the countryside in Kyushu, where my old man was from. We were supposed to forget about it and start over, but...


In the end, it was just too much for the family, and my father and mother divorced.
No matter how many times my old man told my mother that it wasn't her fault, it was hopeless.

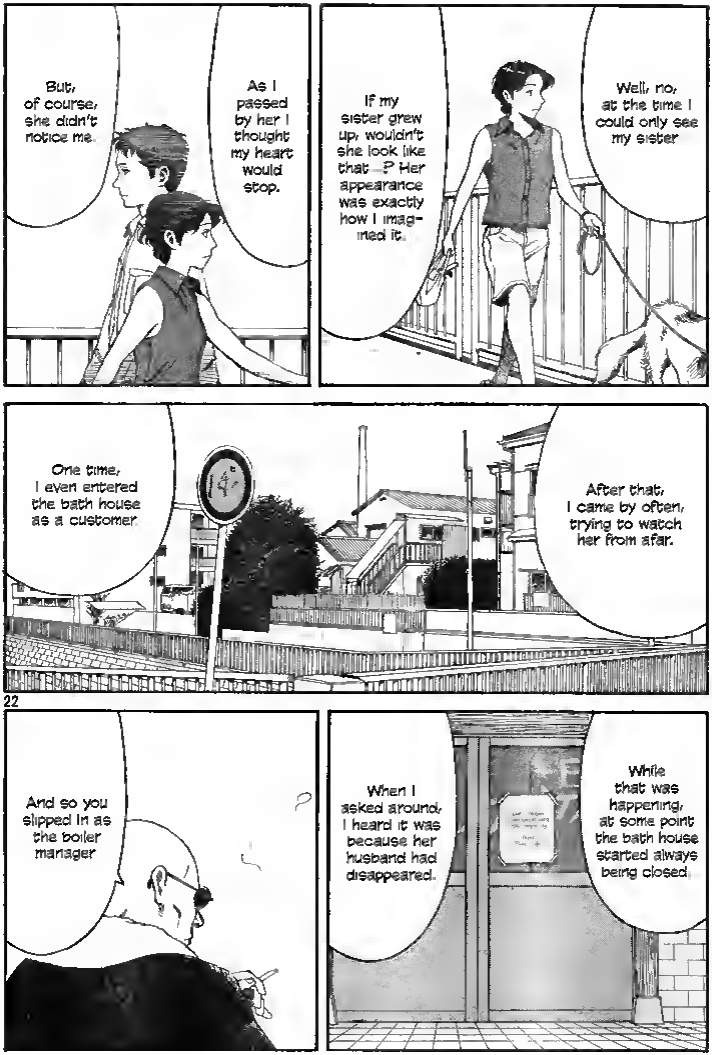
20


But when I got to grade school, I started to only play with friends who were the same age.
I loved my sister. When we were young, we played together all the time.

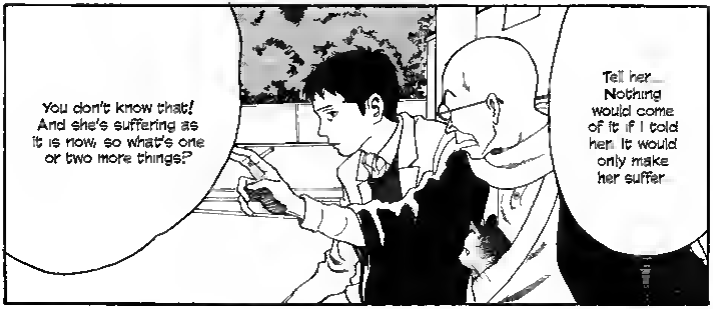
And what about you?
It always casts a shadow over those left behind.

I was haunted by feelings of powerlessness because I was unable to protect my sister.
I... I also blamed myself. More than just blamed...

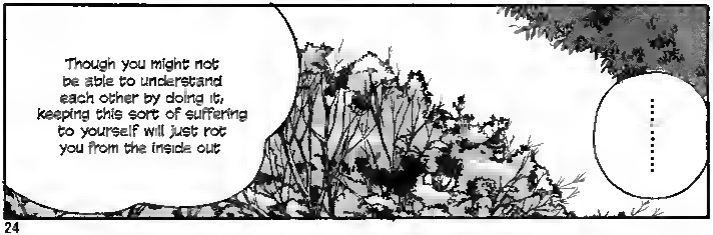
And that was Kana-bou...
Anyway, I created a separate world from my sister, and my sister began to play with a girl around her age from outside our home.
It might have been that I was teased for playing with my little sister and distanced myself.
...The more we moved to new places, the worse things got... I don't have very many memories from that time.
...After my parents got divorced, I went with my mother. We moved around a lot.
Without thinking about it, I started to wander around
After what happened, for a long time I hadn't come anywhere near here, but one time for work I was passing close by.
With one look, I knew she was the girl.
And then I saw a single woman out walking her dog coming towards me


But, of course, she didn't notice me.
As I passed by her I thought my heart would stop.
If my sister grew up, wouldn't she look like that...? Her appearance was exactly how I imagined it.
Well, no, at the time I could only see my sister
One time, I even entered the bath house as a customer
After that, I came by often, trying to watch her from afar.
And so you slipped in as the boiler manager
When I asked around, I heard it was because her husband had disappeared.
While that was happening, at some point the bath house started always being closed.

...I'm not really sure why I came here myself
When I asked the union, they introduced me right away
I'd worked at an inn previously, so I had all the various qualifications required
For the most part, it seemed to me that she'd forgotten about that incident that had happened so long ago
And it's not that I think I want her to notice me
It's not like I think of her as my sister
I think she had been bearing the wounds and suffering the whole time
...But I was wrong. She hadn't forgotten at all
Why weren't you able to tell her? Why didn't you reveal who you were to her?
Why didn't you say that to her?

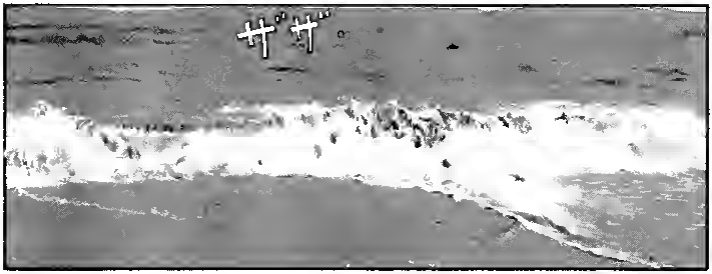

You don't know that! And she's suffering as it is now, so what's one or two more things?
Tell her... Nothing would come of it if I told her. It would only make her suffer

You should deal with your suffering together! If you're hurting, then you should cry and talk with each other about it
If you get yourself involved in her personal affairs, you'll be more than just two individuals!


Though you might not be able to understand each other by doing it, keeping this sort of suffering to yourself will just rot you from the inside out
.....

.....
I shouldn't have come here

...I don't think there's anything I can do for Kanae-san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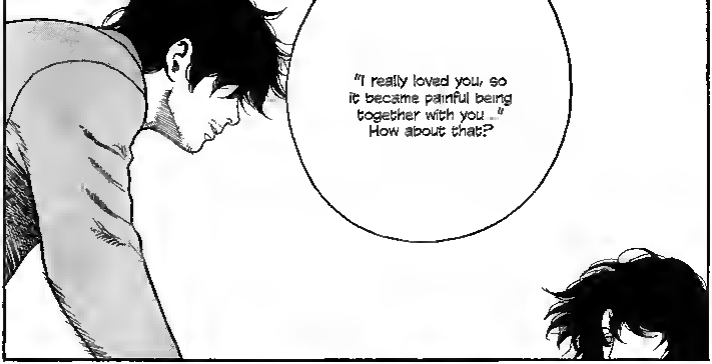
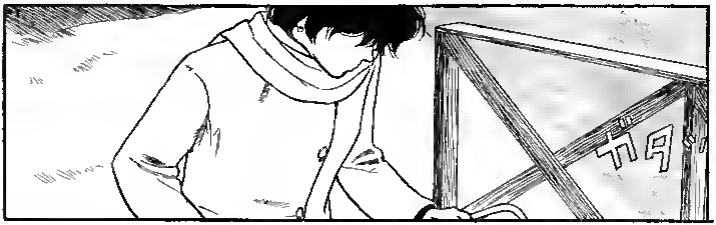
Someone who seemed diligent stepped up afterwards, though, so that eased my mind a little
...Saying this only now may be hypocritical, but I think it was really awful of me to suddenly abandon my job

It's fine, though; I'm not going to rely on men anymore
He is diligent, but I don't know when he'll be leaving

I'm getting the oil burner ready, and Auntie and I will be able to handle things ourselves.

I'm going to get going.
I'd like you to get rid of all my things. Sorry for asking you to do yet another thing for me
ガタッ
The divorce papers are buried at my place, so I'll send them to you later.
I still haven't heard why you left
26
I'm a liar, so
Was there something you couldn't stand about me? Some lie that made it so you couldn't stay anymore?


"I really loved you, so it became painful being together with you..."
How about that?



Can I slap you as hard as I can, one last time?

27

Go ahead

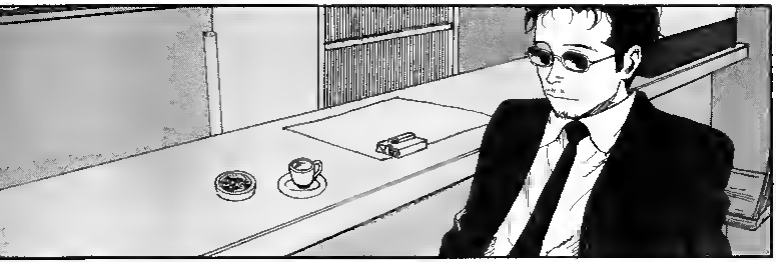
...Sure.
Don't catch a cold, and don't skip your meals.

...Okay.
No, that's...
When you send the divorce papers, make sure you write your address. I'll send you your insurance card later.

28

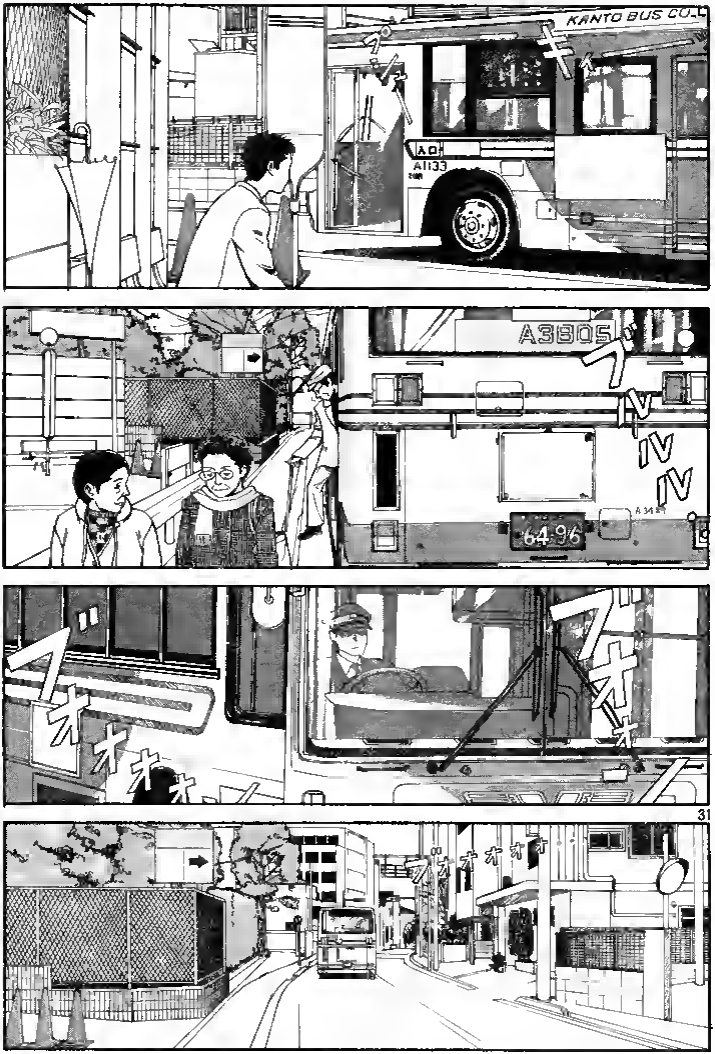
Yeah...

It would've been good for us if we'd been able to talk like this before.



29

Well, that's life
That so?
..Yes..
Oh, looks like the bus is here.
Goodbye.
Stay healthy.
30
ブォォォォォ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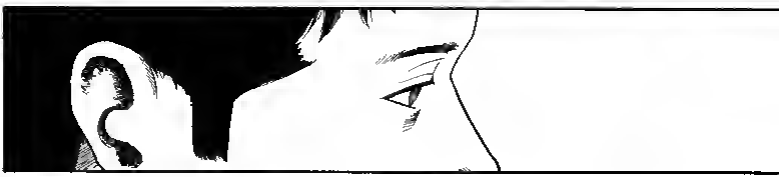
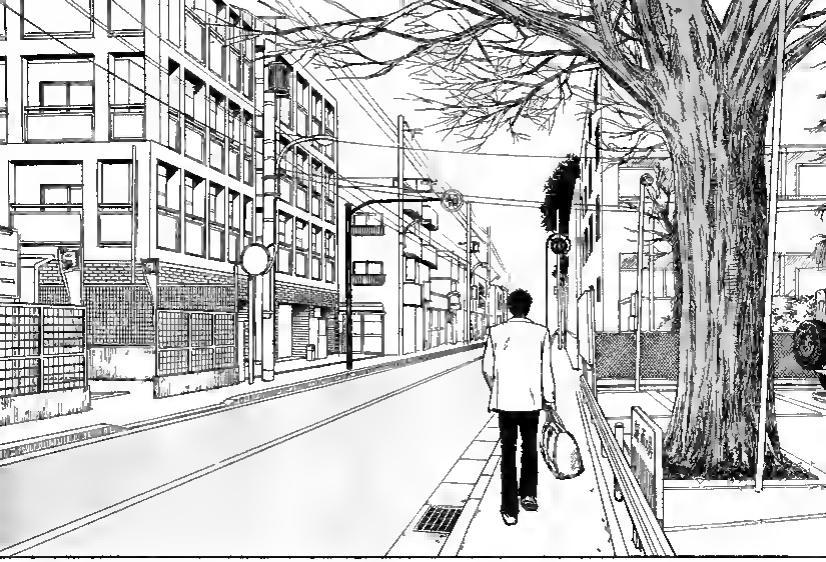




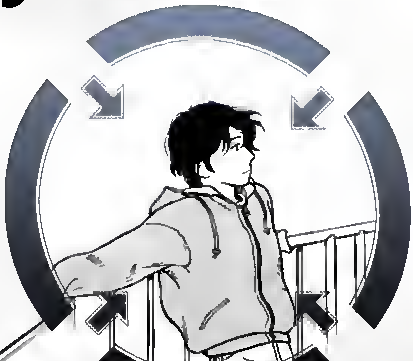
UNDERCURRENT

fin

Stop and pause Walk and venture forth Towards the place where you were before. Towards the future.

NCIS

Translator: Laika
Cleaner: CassiusOS
PR/TS: Conclusion
QC: CassiusOS
Reader: YOU!!



UNDERCURRENT

END

#NCIS@irc.irchighway.net

I hope you enjoyed it. I sure did

www.ncismangs.net